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In defiance of discipline: antiquarianism, archaeology and history in late nineteenth-century Scotland

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Abstract

The nineteenth century is often seen as the period in which old-fashioned antiquarianism gave way to modern archaeological science. Whilst that is certainly the case, this article argues that in Scotland that new emphasis on material evidence and prehistory remained part of a broad antiquarian sphere until the early twentieth century. Even towards the end of the 1800s, antiquarianism continued to encompass the study of both material culture and documentary sources. It was also, for a time at least, a major influence on narrative history-writing. Throughout this period, it was primarily in Scotland's antiquarian community, rather than its academic or professional institutions, that collective understandings of the nation's history were advanced. The article thus uses the Scottish case study to question common assumptions about the decline of polymathic antiquarianism and the rise of specialist disciplinarity in the later part of the nineteenth century.

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Rosemary Sweet is clear that eighteenth-century antiquaries defined their study of the past in the broadest terms.¹ Yet nineteenth-century antiquarianism is often interpreted through the prism of present-day disciplinarity. Professional historians in the West have been keen to distance themselves from what Arnaldo Momigliano calls 'the type of man who is interested in historical facts without being interested in history'.² There have been numerous studies of the nineteenth-century 'historical imagination', to use Hayden White's phrase, which marginalise antiquarianism or omit it altogether.³ Instead, the discipline positions itself as heir to a separate tradition of narrative literary history-writing.⁴ As a result, the centrality of source analysis to modern historical techniques in the UK tends not to be associated with home-grown antiquarianism, but rather with nineteenth-century European historians like Leopold von Ranke. Peter Lambert's explanation of the birth of the historical profession is emblematic of that view. He explains that historians in the late 1800s 'developed what might

¹ R. Sweet, *Antiquaries: the Study of the Past in Eighteenth Century Britain* (London, 2004), p. xix.

² A. Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley, 1990), p. 54.

³ H. White, *Metahistory: the Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, 2nd edition (Baltimore, 2004, orig. 1973); See also J. M. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge, 1981); J. Kenyon, *The History Men: the Historical Profession in England since the Renaissance* (London, 1993).

⁴ S. Crane, 'Story, history and the passionate Collector', in M. Myrone and L. Peltz (eds.), *Producing the Past: Aspect of Antiquarian Culture and Practice 1700-1850* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 187-203; M. Bentley, *Modern Historiography: an Introduction* (Abingdon, 1999), pp. 8-15 and 25-35.

be called a tool-kit' based around critical engagement with archival sources. Yet he makes no mention of the antiquarian communities in which such skills were originally honed.⁵

Archaeologists, however, rightly see antiquarianism as the crucible in which their own discipline was forged. That is particularly the case for prehistory, where interpretations rely on material evidence alone. In 1976 Stuart Piggott concluded an essay on British antiquarianism with the words 'now, on the eve of Victoria's reign, we leave antiquarianism as it becomes archaeology'.⁶ In his tellingly-titled book *From Antiquarian to Archaeologist* (2014), Tim Murray similarly argues that in the nineteenth century 'as opposed to the historian whose task was to comment on texts, the antiquary was responsible for the management of material remains of the past – be they objects or monuments'.⁷ Similar interpretations have been advanced by many other scholars writing on the early history of the archaeological discipline.⁸ Archaeologists thus align themselves with antiquarianism to a significantly greater extent than historians. The result is a tendency to view nineteenth-century antiquarianism in terms of its engagement with material culture, relegating the antiquary's work with written sources to a subordinate position. The appropriateness of that model for Scottish antiquarianism has gone relatively unquestioned. In 1977 Piggott, writing specifically about eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Scotland, noted a distinction between antiquarian interest in 'the monumental and tangible antiquities of man in Britain' and 'documentary sources, the province of historians'.⁹ Writing a year earlier, Angus Graham saw the 1860s in Scotland as the decade in which 'scientific archaeology' fully superseded the more idiosyncratic methods prevalent earlier in the century.¹⁰ An edited collection on *The Scottish Antiquarian Tradition* (1981), published to celebrate the SAS's bicentenary, similarly privileged material culture. Of the eight essays included, five deal substantially with the nineteenth century and four of those focus predominantly on the interpretation of material

⁵ P. Lambert, 'The professionalization of history in Britain', *Making History: the Changing Face of the Profession in England* (Institute of Historical Research, 2008), <https://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/professionalisation.html>, accessed 5 February 2019; see also R. Evans, *In Defence of History*, 2nd edition (London, 2000, orig. 1997), p. 19; R. Torstendahl, *The Rise and Propagation of the Historical Profession* (New York, 2015), pp. 69-77.

⁶ S. Piggott, *Ruins in a Landscape; Essays in Antiquarianism* (Edinburgh, 1976), p. 129.

⁷ T. Murray, *From Antiquarian to Archaeologist: the History and Philosophy of Archaeology* (Barnsley, 2014), pp. 189-90.

⁸ J. Reid, 'Archaeology and anthropology', in J. Holmes and S. Ruston (eds.), *The Routledge Research Companion to Nineteenth-century Literature and Science* (London, 2017), pp. 357-71; P. Bogucki, 'Ancient Europe: the discovery of antiquity', in P. Bahn (ed.), *The History of Archaeology: an Introduction* (Abingdon, 2014), pp. 15-38; A. Schnapp, 'Between antiquarians and archaeologists – continuities and ruptures' in T. Murray and C. Evans (eds.), *Histories of Archaeology: a Reader in the History of Archaeology* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 392-405; J. Greenfield, *The Return of Cultural Treasures*, 2nd edition (Cambridge 1996, orig. 1989), p. 186; J. Thomas, 'Archaeology's place in modernity', *Modernism/Modernity*, 11, 1 (2004), pp. 17-34; B. G. Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, 2nd edition (Cambridge, 2006, orig. 1989), pp. 5 and 120.

⁹ S. Piggott and M. Robertson, *Three Centuries of Scottish Archaeology: George Buchanan to Lord Abercromby* (Edinburgh, 1977), Foreword [n. p.]; see also Piggott, *Ruins in a Landscape*, p. 1-3.

¹⁰ A. Graham, 'The archaeology of Joseph Anderson', *PSAS*, 107 (1976), pp. 279-98.

remains.¹¹ More recent work from museum curators such as David Clarke and Hugh Cheape has similarly given primacy to Scottish antiquarianism's role as the antecedent of modern archaeology.¹²

That said, scholarship on documentary antiquarianism also has a significant pedigree in Scotland through studies of individuals like David Laing, Joseph Robertson, Joseph Bain and Cosmo Innes, as well as institutions such as the Record Commission and the Register House.¹³ Marinell Ash's seminal book *The Strange Death of Scottish History* (1980) is an archetype for that approach. There Ash explored the character of Scottish antiquarianism in the 1800s and charting its apparent deterioration into historiographical discord in the later decades of the century. While she included the treatment of material evidence in her discussion, it focused far more on antiquarian publishing and narrative history-writing.¹⁴ So influential was her thesis that many more recent works about textual antiquarianism in nineteenth-century Scotland can, in one respect or another, be read as responses to it.¹⁵ In this

¹¹ R. B. K. Stevenson, 'The museum, its beginnings and its development. part I: to 1858', pp. 31-85; D. Clarke, 'Scottish archaeology in the second half of the nineteenth century', pp. 114-41; R. Stevenson, 'The museum, its beginnings and its development. part II, the National Museum to 1954', pp. 142-211; I. Stewart, 'Two centuries of Scottish Numismatics', pp. 227-65; all in *The Scottish Antiquarian Tradition*, ed. A. S. Bell (Edinburgh, 1981),

¹² D. Clarke, '"The foremost figure in all matters relating to Scottish archaeology": aspects of the work of Joseph Anderson (1832-1916)', *PSAS*, 132 (2002), pp. 1-18; H. Cheape, 'Objects as evidence: the evaluation of material culture', in J. M. Fladmark (ed.), *Heritage and Museums: Shaping National Identity* (Aberdeen, 2000), pp. 61-75 (62); H. Cheape, 'The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and their museum: Scotland's national collection and a national discourse', *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 14 (2010), pp. 357-73, at 367.

¹³ C. P. Finlayson, 'David Laing and his Friends', *University of Edinburgh Journal*, 22 (1968), pp. 145-156; M. Ash, 'David Laing', *The Past and the Present; the Role of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland*, ed. A. Fenton (Edinburgh, 1979), pp. 9-14; J. N. Miner, 'Joseph Robertson and the Scottish middle ages', *Innes Review*, 32 (1981), pp. 34-54; E. L. G. Stones, 'Joseph Bain (1826-1911) and the origin of the Calendar of documents relating to Scotland', *Archives*, 6, 30 (1963), pp. 78-84; R. A. Marsden, *Cosmo Innes and the Defence of Scotland's Past, c 1825-1875* (Farnham, 2014); M. Ash, 'Scott and Historical Publishing; the Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs', in *Scots Antiquaries and Historians; papers read at the Silver Jubilee Conference of the Abertay Historical Society on 15 April 1972*, ed. A. A. M. Duncan (Dundee, 1972), pp. 26-42; D. J. Withrington, 'Aberdeen Antiquaries; the founding of the Spalding Club, 1839', *Aberdeen University Review*, 44 (1971), pp. 43-55; P. Gouldsborough, 'The Record Commission and Scotland', *Prisca Muniment; Studies in Archival and Administrative History Presented to Dr. A. E. J. Hollaender*, ed. F. Ranger (London, 1973), pp. 19-26; M. D. Young, 'The age of the deputy clerk register, 1806-1928', *SHR*, 53 (1974), pp. 157-93.

¹⁴ M. Ash, *The Strange Death of Scottish History* (Edinburgh, 1980).

¹⁵ C. Kidd, 'The Strange Death of Scottish History Revisited; Constructions of the Past in Scotland c. 1790-1914', *SHR*, 76 (1997), pp. 87-102; I. Ferris, 'Printing the past; Walter Scott's Bannatyne Club and the antiquarian document', *Romanticism*, 11 (2005), pp. 143-60; A. Ross, 'The Bannatyne Club and the Publication of Scottish Ecclesiastical Cartularies', *SHR*, 85 (2006), pp. 202-30; Marsden, *Cosmo Innes*, pp. 3-19.

way our view of the Scottish antiquarian sphere in the 1800s has been inadvertently distorted by the fact that later scholars have chosen to focus on approaches to either material culture or written evidence, but rarely both. Yet Harry Ritter, following received historiographical wisdom, defines antiquarianism as ‘a branch of scholarship [...] devoted to the appreciation and classification of relics, monuments and old texts.’¹⁶ This article will ask how long that definition, particular in relation to the breadth of evidence it encompasses, retained its currency Scotland.

The continuing currency of textual scholarship

Although disciplinary boundaries have become less rigid in recent years, archaeologists still deal primarily with sites and objects whilst historians work principally with texts. That distinction is reinforced by the fact that, in evidential terms, materiality is all there is for prehistoric periods. As Thomas Patterson put it in 2000:

Whilst archaeologists rely primarily on material remains and, more importantly, their spatial associations with one another, historians deal with written records. Another way of saying that they have different epistemologies and methodologies is that both participate in a technical division of labour that emerged in the nineteenth century.¹⁷

Nonetheless, the antiquarianism from which archaeology emerged was a field that encompassed both material and textual sources, as well as the areas of investigation that would subsequently become the remit of anthropologists, philologists, and art historians.¹⁸ That was certainly the case in Scotland at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The country’s main antiquarian organ was the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (SAS), founded in 1783 with a remit to ‘investigate both antiquities and natural and civil history in general’.¹⁹ In this way it took the entirety of the Scottish past as its purview and, as Ronald Cant explains, the term ‘antiquities’ referred to ‘the visible evidence in documentary or structural form of an older way of life’.²⁰ Yet at some point that unified approach to the study of the past began to splinter. In 1970 Angus Graham produced a statistical survey of papers read to and published by the SAS between 1780 and 1930. This work helps us to pin-point that change.²¹ Indeed, his approach is a major influence on the one taken in this article, which uses paper titles and keyword searches to identify preponderances of interest in various antiquarian publications. This mode of analysis inevitably skews the sample towards

¹⁶ H. Ritter, *Dictionary of Concepts in History* (New York, 1986), pp. 14-15.

¹⁷ T. C. Patterson, ‘Archaeologists and historians confront civilisation, relativism and poststructuralism in the late Twentieth Century’, in A. Dirlik, V. Bahl and P. Gran (eds.), *History After the Three Worlds: Post-Eurocentric Historiographies* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 49-65, at 49-50. See also D. L. Hardesty, ‘Archaeology’, in D. L. Hardesty (ed.), *Archaeology Volume I: Encyclopaedia of Life Support Systems* (Paris, 2010), p. 4.

¹⁸ G. Ceserani, ‘Antiquarian transformations in eighteenth-century Europe’, in *World Antiquarianism: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Alan Schnapp (Los Angeles, 2015), 317-42.

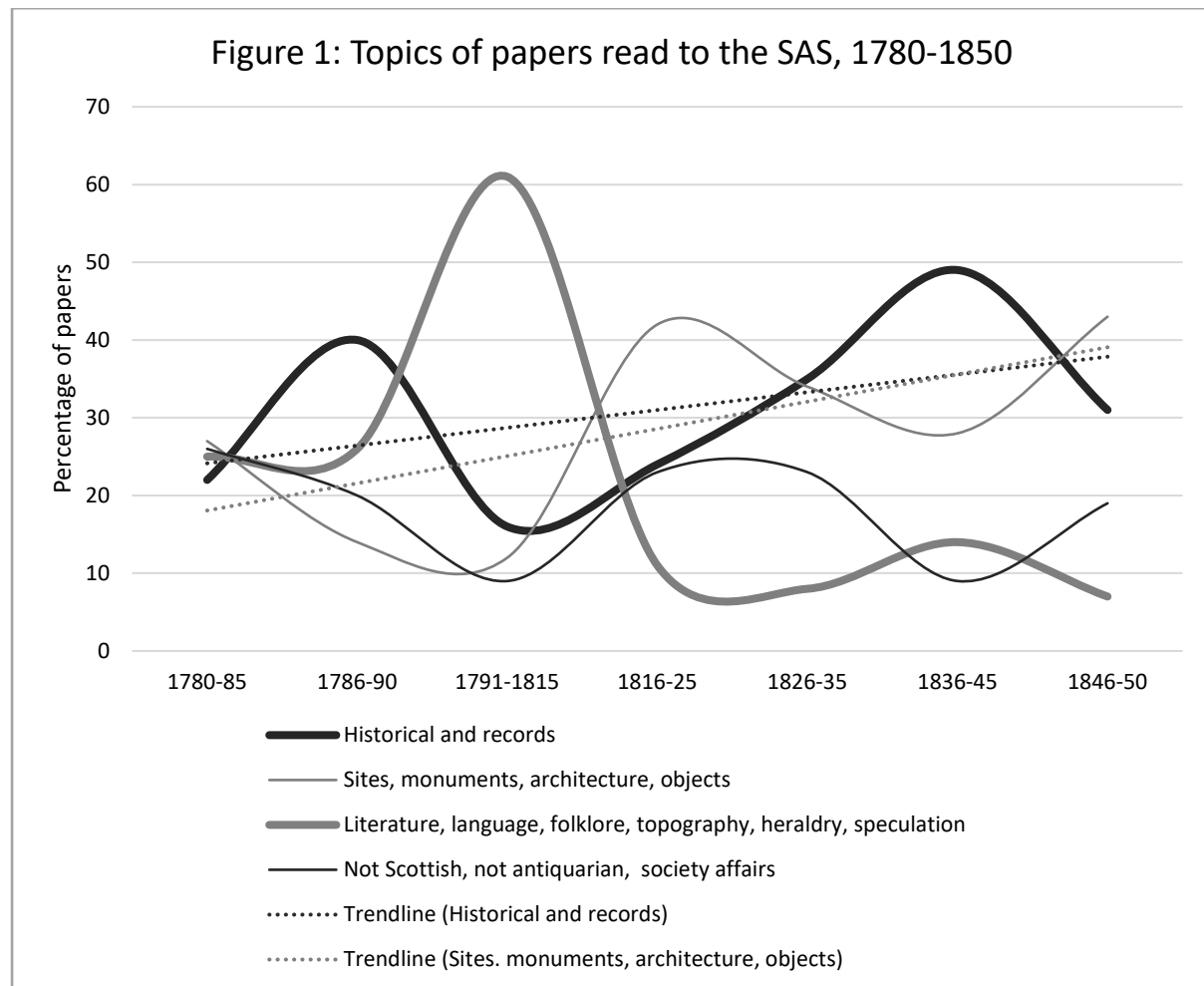
¹⁹ W. Smellie, ‘An historical account of the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland’, *Archaeologia Scotica*, 1 (1792), p. viii.

²⁰ R. G. Cant, ‘David Stewart Erskine, 11th Earl of Buchan: founder of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland’, in Bell, *Scottish Antiquarian Tradition*, pp. 1-30, at 10; See also Cheape, ‘The Society and their museum’, pp. 366-7.

²¹ A. Graham, ‘Records and opinions, 1780-1930’, *PSAS*, 102 (1970), pp. 241-84.

publications that are available online. It also lacks the subtlety that a qualitative approach would provide, and privileges published texts over the rich vein of archive material available. Nevertheless, it does help to establish the broad contours of antiquarian activity in Scotland across more than a century, without necessitating the close reading of tens of thousands of pages of text. It is an initial mapping exercise, laying groundwork for future research.

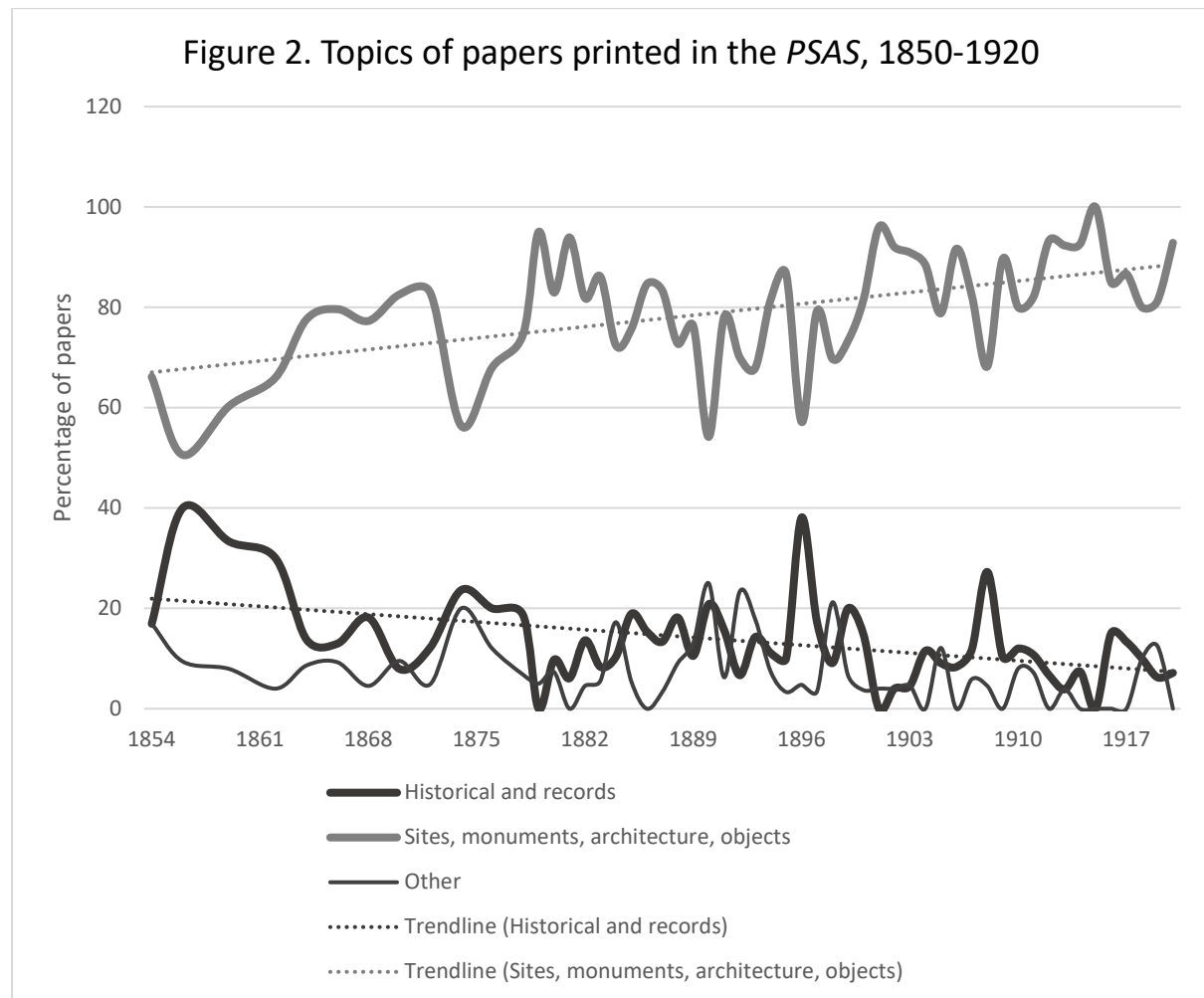
Figure 1 shows Graham's findings on the topics of papers delivered at SAS meetings from 1781 to 1850, at which point the society's regular *Proceedings* (henceforth *PSAS*) entered publication.²²



What this graph suggests is that, over the first half of the nineteenth century, the society's interests became less varied than they had been in the late eighteenth. Contributions relating to literature, language, folklore, topography, heraldry, as well as the odd bit of unfounded antiquarian speculation, had greatly diminished by 1825. Yet right up to 1850, papers relating

²² Figure 1 is based on tables II, III and IV in Graham, 'Records and Opinions', on pp. 246, 247 and 250. The categories used there have been amalgamated here to show the relative popularity of historical and archaeological approaches. Graham's information came from the 'List of Communications read at Meetings of the Society, from 1780 to 1830', *Archaeologia Scotica*, 3, appendix (1831), pp. 149-96 and 'List of Communications read at Meetings of the Society from 1830 to 1851', *Archaeologia Scotica*, 4 appendix (1857), pp. 13-50.

to documentary research and material culture remained roughly comparable in number. What's more, both were on the rise. Graham then looks at the topics of papers published in the *PSAS* from 1854 onwards. Here his technique changes; instead of categorising each paper according to its primary focus, he separately counts multiple topics and types of source used within each piece. The result is a useful representation of SAS activities, but not a clear breakdown of where the Society's main interests lay. In addition, for the period beyond 1850 Graham uses a different system of categorisation which introduces greater nuance for 'archaeological' topics but not for 'historical' ones.²³ His findings are therefore not as helpful as they might be for the purposes of this discussion.

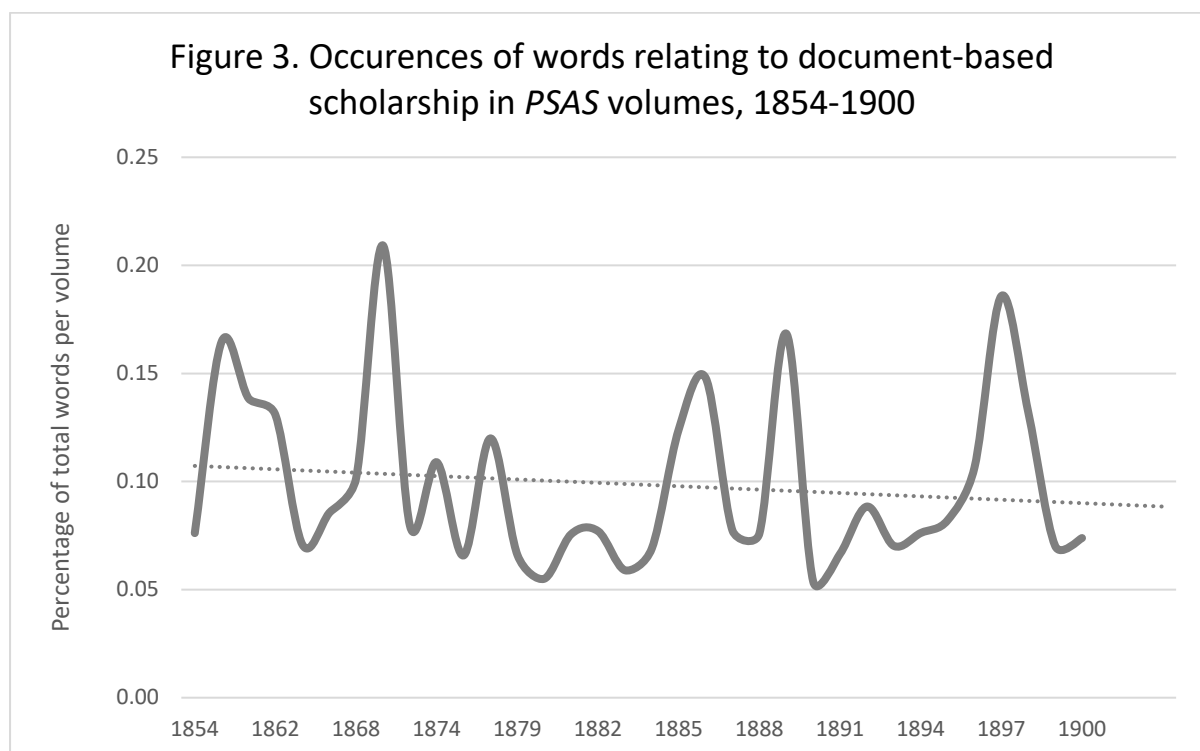


For that reason, I have conducted my own analysis of the papers published in the *PSAS* up until 1920, as shown in Figure 2.²⁴ This graph tells a different story. From 1860 onwards, papers in the SAS's published proceedings focused on physical remains established a clear and increasing ascendancy over those relating or relying chiefly on documentary research. That said, those categorised as dealing with 'sites, monuments, architecture, objects' in the

²³ Graham, 'Records and Opinions', pp. 280-3.

²⁴ Figure 2 is based on the titles of papers published in vols. 1-54 of the *PSAS*, along with an examination of the contents of papers for which the main emphasis is not clear from the title. It is acknowledged that some papers draw upon both written and material evidence; in such instances the findings represent the primary approach used in each paper.

graph encompass a huge range of subjects, from prehistoric barrows and flint axe heads to Gothic arches and seventeenth-century candlesticks. So what Figure 2 does not reveal is the extent to which the *PSAS*'s contributors shifted their focus towards prehistory in the second part of the century. That question will be discussed in a later section. For now, we need only note that by 1920 papers based on documentary scholarship constituted on average less than ten percent of the contents of *PSAS* volumes.



That said, Figure 3 suggests that the frequency with which terms associated with documentary research were used in *PSAS* volumes fell only marginally between 1854 and 1900.²⁵ Whilst the average number of document-based papers sank from 22 percent in 1854 to 13 percent in 1900, the use of terms relating to that research only dropped from just under 0.11 to 0.09 per cent of total word count per volume over the same period. Indeed, the issues in which those terms appear with the second and third most frequency were published in 1897 and 1889. Taken together, therefore, Figures 2 and 3 suggest that textual scholarship remained a small but significant element of the society's activities into the start of the 1900s. Material from the SAS's archives supports that interpretation. In the late 1850s, for instance the society lobbied to have the *Register of the Privy Council* published. That effort that was successful and early volumes were edited by John Hill Burton who was one of their own

²⁵ The results shown in Figure 3 relate to the cumulative totals of searches in *volumnes 1-34 of the PSAS* for the following terms: documents, texts, manuscripts, MSS, charters, carta, chartulary, register, chronicle, annal, instrument. These were plotted using AntConc textual analysis software, working with OCR'd PDFs of the volumes. Derivations were included through wildcard characters. The figures shown are percentages of the total number of words in the volume. The figure stops at 1900 because beyond that date fully searchable texts of *PSAS* volumes are not currently available.

fellows.²⁶ Through the 1860s and 70s, meanwhile, the SAS received gratis copies of manuscript and record publications from a variety of sources. When the editors of the Rolls Series questioned this, the SAS's curator Joseph Anderson, argued strenuously that the practice should continue.²⁷ As late as 1923, the Society wrote to the Scottish Secretary to complain about the chronic understaffing of the public record collection at the Register House and call for a resumption in its publication programme.²⁸ The same interest in written sources can be seen in the three catalogues that the SAS made of its museum during the 1800s.²⁹ In all of them, most of the space is given over to objects. But towards the end of each comes a list of manuscripts and records. In his 1849 catalogue, compiled in expectation of handing the collection over to the state, Daniel Wilson lists only ten and states that they represent a much larger collection. In his 1876 catalogue William McCulloch lists fifty-one, and in their 1892 catalogue Joseph Anderson and George Black itemise no less than 152.³⁰ Moreover, these lists related specifically to items on display, implying a much larger collection in storage. Matthew Livingstone's 1907 calendar of the charters, writs and deeds held by the SAS listed 154 documents, but these constituted 'only part of the many original legal or diplomatic MSS' in the SAS's possession.³¹

Of course, the SAS was an Edinburgh society and most of its leaders were part of a metropolitan elite. The situation elsewhere in Scotland was somewhat different. Perth had boasted its own Literary and Antiquarian Society since 1784, tasked with 'publishing ancient MSS and papers read before the Society and for collecting Coins, MSS, books and other articles rare or antique and providing a Museum for their exhibition'. Whilst the society thrived, it quickly became focused on meetings and collecting rather than publication.³² It was not until 1856 that Scotland's next provincial antiquarian society was founded, The aim of the Glasgow Archaeological Society (henceforth GAS) was 'to record interesting

²⁶ NMS 587, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Minute Book, 1853-68, meeting held on 16 March 1859; M. Fry, 'Burton, John Hill (1809-1881)', *ODNB* (online); Stronach, 'Stuart, John', *ODNB*.

²⁷ NMS UC31, Documents concerning the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland's library and library exchanges 1865-1871, items 11, 15-18, 23, 25, 35, 41 and 42.

²⁸ NRS, E825/132, Register House department's files: Record Office, item 1, Memorandum By the Council of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Respecting the Public Records of Scotland, date stamped by Exchequer, Edinburgh: 5 Apr. 1923.

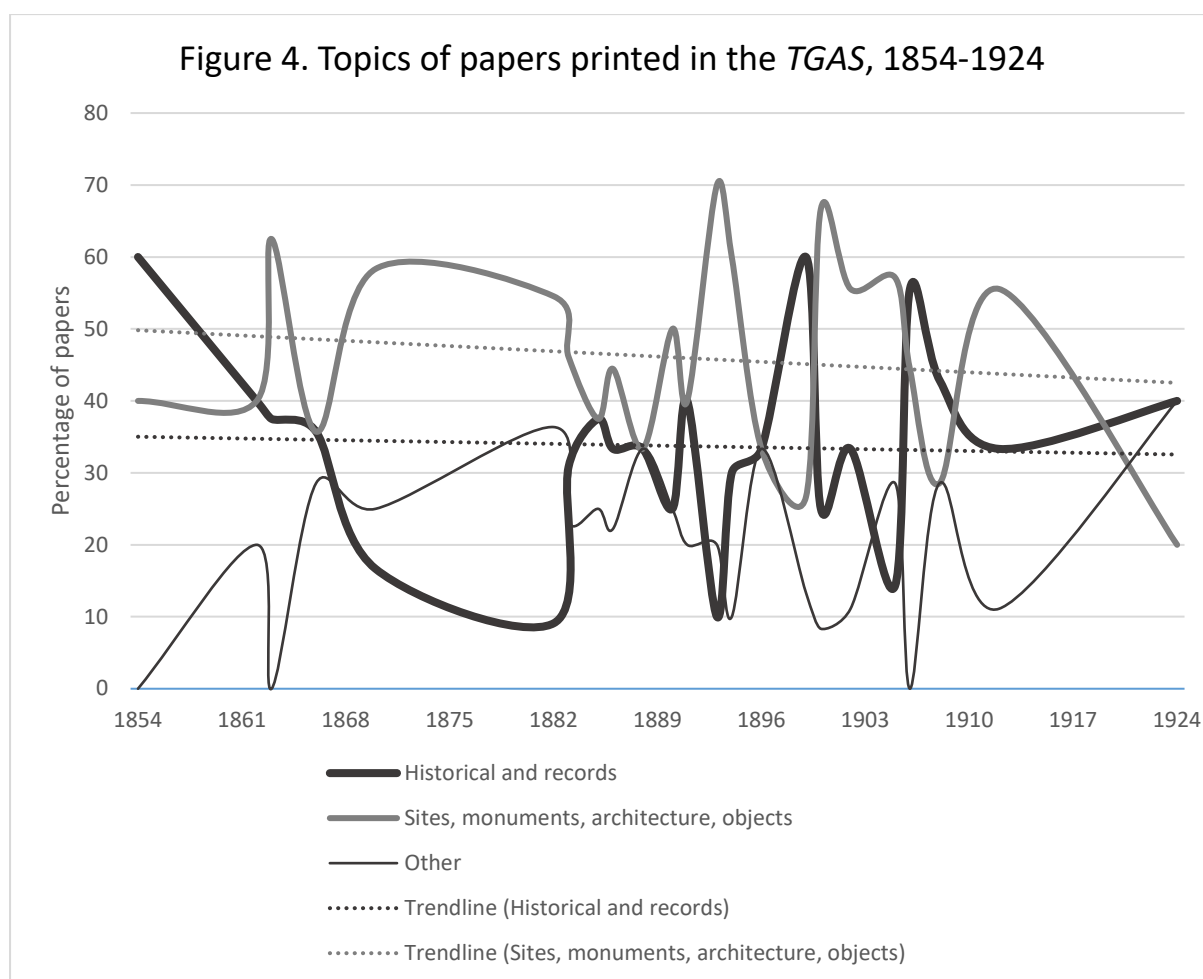
²⁹ In 1858 the museum was transferred to state ownership but remained under the day-to-day custodianship of the Society; Stevenson, 'The museum part II', pp. 147-9, 170-2.

³⁰ D. Wilson, *Synopsis of the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1849), pp. 150-2; W. McCulloch, *Catalogue of Antiquities in the National Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1876), pp. 175-8; J. Anderson and George Black, *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1982), pp. 376-80.

³¹ M. Livingstone, 'A calendar of charters and other writs relating to lands or benefices in Scotland in possession of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland', *PSAS*, 41 (1907), pp. 303-92, at 303-5.

³² A. Hume, *The Learned Societies and Printing Clubs of the United Kingdom, Being an Account of the Respective Origin, History, Objects and Constitution* (London, 1847), p. 185; See also D. Allan, 'The Scottish Enlightenment and the politics of provincial culture: The Perth Literary and Antiquarian Society ca. 1784-1790', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 27, 3 (2003), pp. 1-30.

antiquarian discoveries and to disseminate information regarding antiquities'.³³ These were ambitious goals, comparable in breadth to that with which the SAS had been founded some seventy years earlier. Figure 4 uses the topics of contributions to the Society's *Transactions* (henceforth *TGAS*) to give a sense of how it pursued them.³⁴

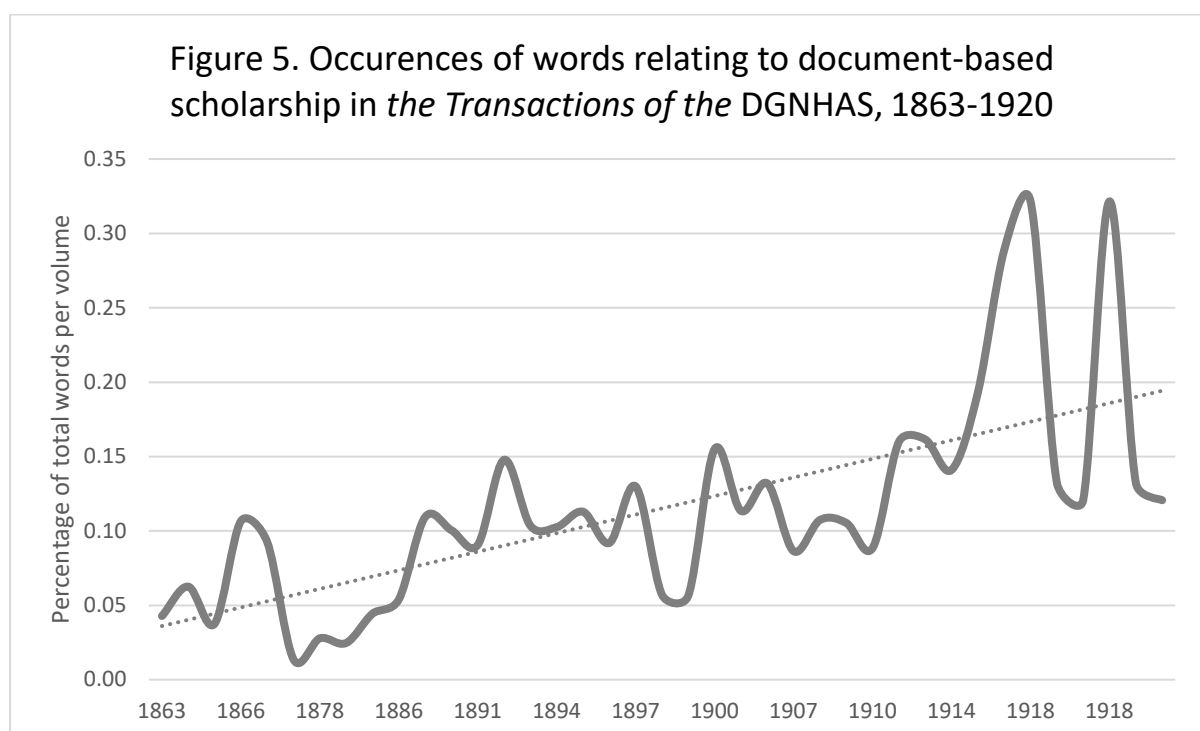


This chart shows that, unlike the SAS, documentary research remained a core element of GAS activities until deep into the twentieth century. Whilst it was not as central to the Society's work as material culture, it was a close-run thing with just nine percent between the two average contribution rates by 1924. Evidently the GAS retained a traditionally catholic understanding of the antiquarian remit for a longer period and to a greater extent than its metropolitan counterpart. The same was true of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society (henceforth DGNHAS), founded 1862. Figure 5 shows the

³³ J. Mearns, '150 years of the Glasgow Archaeological Society', *Scottish Archaeological Journal*, 30 (2008), pp. vi-xvii.

³⁴ Figure 4 is based on the titles of papers in 24 issues of the *Transactions of the GAS* which were published on an irregular basis, along with an examination of the contents of papers for which the main emphasis is not clear from the title. It is acknowledged that some papers draw upon both written and material evidence; in such instances the findings represent the primary approach used in each paper.

frequency with which words associated with documentary scholarship appeared in its *Transactions* up until 1920.³⁵



This graph reveals that the use of such terms significantly increased over time, culminating in the 1918 volume. Considered alongside Figure 4 this makes a strong case that, in provincial societies, Ritter's definition of antiquarianism as engaged with both material and textual sources remained relevant until at least the start of the interwar period. The publications of the Ayrshire and Wigtonshire Archaeological Association (henceforth AWAA), founded 1877, further support that interpretation. The AWAA was formed 'to preserve some record of the various prehistoric and medieval remains of antiquity in Ayshire and Wigtownshire', most likely in response to the threat posed by agricultural improvement projects. In laying out the Association's goals its founders also highlighted the 'many early charters, original MSS. [...] which would be of great interest and value to print'.³⁶ Across the final twenty years of the nineteenth century the AWAA published ten volumes of its *Archaeological and Historical Collections*, comprising a mixture of discussions about material remains and transcripts of written sources. But in the same period, it also produced seven volumes of monastic charters, burghal records, legal sources, and aristocratic correspondence.³⁷ Most

³⁵ The results in Figure 5 relate to the cumulative totals of searches in 36 volumes of DGNHAS proceedings for the following terms: documents, texts, manuscripts, MSS, charters, carta, chartulary, register, chronicle, annal, instrument. These were plotted using AntConc textual analysis software, working with OCR'd PDFs of the volumes. Derivations were included through wildcard characters. The figures shown are percentages of the total number of words in the volume.

³⁶ R. Cochran-Patrick (ed.), *Archaeological and Historical Collections Relating to the Counties of Ayr and Wigtown I*, (Edinburgh, 1878), p. xvii.

³⁷ D. and W. Stevenson, *Scottish Texts and Calendars; an Analytical Guide to Serial Publications* (Edinburgh, 1987), pp. 14-16.

tellingly of all it did so, like the GAS, under the auspices of the term ‘archaeological’. The significance of that label will be discussed a little later.

The broad church of antiquarian endeavour

One of the SAS’s initial aims was to publish editions of medieval church records. Its failure to do so was not down to epistemological constraints, but rather the doldrum periods it experienced over its first sixty years of existence.³⁸ That aspiration was resuscitated in the 1820s and 30s through a new batch of clubs with specific mandates to publish historical documents.³⁹ The first was the Bannatyne Club, founded in 1823 by Walter Scott for ‘the printing and publication of works illustrative of the history, literature and antiquities of Scotland’. By 1867 the club had produced 115 works relating to Scotland’s past, almost all of them editions of medieval and early modern records and manuscripts.⁴⁰ The Maitland Club was founded in 1829, then 1833 saw the creation of the Abbotsford Club and the Iona Club. Following the Bannatyne’s lead, all three sought to print material relevant to Scotland’s ‘history, literature and antiquities’.⁴¹ The Spalding Club, founded 1839, threw genealogy and topography into the mix but its main purpose was still the ‘printing of inedited manuscripts’.⁴² These publishing clubs were entirely separate from the SAS in institutional terms. Yet they saw themselves as engaged in a shared endeavour. As late as 1861 the SAS’s secretary David Laing was calling, albeit unsuccessfully, for the Society to create a ‘Scottish antiquarian club’ to continue the work of the defunct Bannatyne, and it did produce two editions of monastic records in 1868 and 1872.⁴³

Moreover, many of Scotland’s most active antiquaries played leading roles in the SAS and these publishing clubs. John Stuart is a prime example of this. He was a founding member of the Spalding Club in 1839 and of the Scottish Burgh Records Society in 1868. In 1853 he was employed to work on the public records held at the Register House, and in 1870 he became an inspector for the Historical Manuscript Commission. He edited numerous record editions relating to the medieval church, early Presbyterianism, aristocratic families, and the royal burghs.⁴⁴ Yet he was also a secretary of the SAS during the 1850s and, of his forty-seven

³⁸ Cant, ‘Earl of Buchan’, p. 18; D. Laing, ‘Anniversary address on the state of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, from 1831 to 1860’, *Archaeologia Scotica*, 5 (1874), pp. 1-44, at 33; Stevenson, ‘The Museum, Part 1’, pp. 48-78; Graham, ‘Records and Opinions’, pp. 246-9.

³⁹ Ash, *Strange Death*, pp. 59-86.

⁴⁰ D. Laing (ed.), *The Bannatyne Club; Lists of Members and the Rules with a Catalogue of the Books Printed for the Bannatyne Club since its Institution in 1823* (Edinburgh, 1867), pp. 31 and 41-91; see also Ferris, ‘Printing the past’, pp. 143-6.

⁴¹ J. Smith (ed.), *Catalogue of the Works Printed for the Maitland Club, instituted March MDCCC.XXVIII, with Lists of the Members and Rules of the Club* (Edinburgh, 1836), p. 3; D. Laing (ed.), *A List of the Members; the Rules; and a Catalogue of Books Printed for the Abbotsford Club since its Institution in 1833* (Edinburgh, 1866), p. xiii; Hume, *Learned Societies*, p. 287.

⁴² J. Stuart (ed.), *Notices of the Spalding Club* (Aberdeen, 1871), p. 6.

⁴³ Laing, ‘Anniversary address’, p. 36; J. Stuart (ed.), *Records of the Priory of the Isle of May* (Edinburgh, 1860); J. Stuart (ed.), *Records of the Monastery of Kinloss: with Illustrative Documents* (Edinburgh, 1872).

⁴⁴ G. Stronach, rev. H. Colin Matthew, ‘Stuart, John (1813–1877), archivist and genealogist’, *ODNB* (online); *First Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts* (London, 1870), p. vii.

contributions to the *PSAS*, thirty-three were about sites and objects.⁴⁵ Indeed his most influential work was *The Sculptured Stones of Scotland* (2 volumes, 1856 and 1867). These tomes, published by the Spalding Club, catalogued a particular class of early medieval monuments commonly found in north-eastern Scotland.⁴⁶ On one level this was a major departure for the Spalding Club, which up until then had concentrated on written records. But from the antiquarian perspective of the time these standing stones were simply a different type of source which could, if read rightly, reveal much about the vanished past. The activities of William Forbes Skene, meanwhile, provide a handy contrast to those of Stuart. Skene was a manuscript scholar, editing *The Chronicles of the Picts and the Scots* (1867) and John of Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* (1871-72). He was also a founder member of the Iona Club and a long-time supporter of the Spalding Club. His seminal work *Celtic Scotland: a History of Ancient Alban* (3 vols., 1876-1880) included some discussion of monument, sites and objects but relied primarily on written sources to make its case.⁴⁷ Like Stuart, Skene was an active member of the SAS, making seventeen contributions to the *PSAS* between 1854 and 1886. But unlike Stuart, who was able to move with ease between material and textual sources, Skene's papers depended chiefly on the study of documents. Even the eight that related to sites and buildings relied mainly on written evidence rather than the direct analysis of physical remains.⁴⁸

Cosmo Innes's antiquarian expertise was, like Skene's, rooted mainly in textual sources. He edited numerous collections of medieval church records and family papers for the Bannatyne, Maitland, Abbotsford and Spalding Clubs. In 1856 he became president of the History Section of the Scottish branch of the Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. In 1853 he was admitted to the SAS, where he served as vice-president (henceforth VP) between 1856 and 1859 and again between 1860 and 1863.⁴⁹ Innes's *Origines Parochiales Scotiae* (1850-1855) was issued by the Bannatyne Club and reveals much about the character of Scottish antiquarianism in that period. This was a detailed survey of 'the antiquities ecclesiastical and territorial of the parishes of Scotland'. Entries were based chiefly on the pre-Reformation church records that Innes had spent many years working on. But most also contained information on topography and landscape, archaeological sites, extant architecture, and local dialect.⁵⁰ This ambitious work, published by a club usually associated with the reproduction of manuscripts and records, provides a useful reminder of the breadth of Scotland's antiquarian sphere. Innes's contributions to the *PSAS* confirm that point. Of the

⁴⁵ For example J. Stuart, 'Notice of remains found in an ancient tomb recently opened in the Cathedral Church of Fortrose', *PSAS*, 1 (1854), pp. 281-4; *idem.*, 'Account of Excavations in Groups of Cairns, Stone Circles, and Hut Circles on Balnabroch, Parish of Kirkmichael, Perthshire, and at West Persie, in that neighbourhood', *PSAS*, 6 (1866), pp. 402-10; *idem.*, 'Note of Recent Excavations at St Margaret's Inch, in the Loch of Forfar', *PSAS*, 10 (1874), pp. 31-4.

⁴⁶ J. Stuart, *The Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, 2 vols. (Aberdeen, 1856 and 1867).

⁴⁷ W. D. Sellar, 'William Forbes Skene (1809-92): historian of Celtic Scotland', *PSAS*, 131 (2001), pp. 3-21.

⁴⁸ For example W. Forbes Skene, 'Notes on the History of the Ruins at Iona', *PSAS*, 10 (1874), pp. 202-14; *idem.*, 'Notes on the History and probable Situation of the Earlier Establishments at Iona, prior to the foundation of the Benedictine Monastery in the end of the Twelfth Century', *PSAS*, 11 (1876), pp. 330-49.

⁴⁹ Marsden, *Cosmo Innes*, pp. 27-54.

⁵⁰ C. Innes, *Origines Parochiales Scotiae; the Antiquities, Ecclesiastical and Territorial, of the Parishes of Scotland*, 2 vols. in 3 pts (Edinburgh, 1850-1855).

fourteen papers he was involved in, seven related to sites or artefacts and the other seven to written sources.⁵¹ In the middle of the century, therefore, record scholars could still offer expert commentary on material evidence. Innes's paper 'Objects of archaeological interest in the West of Scotland', published by the GAS in 1863, is testament to that.⁵² In this period the SAS was thus a forum in which textual as well as material antiquarianism took place. Indeed, many of the Society's leading members were employed to work on the public records at the Register House. Innes played a prominent role in the production of the state-funded *Acts of the Parliament of Scotland* (12 volumes, 1814-1875). Stuart edited the first volume of the *Exchequer Rolls of Scotland* (1875). Joseph Robertson was a curator at the Register House and a VP of the SAS. Thomas Dickson succeeded Robertson at the Register House and was also a fellow of the SAS. So too were William Gibson Craig, Lord Clerk Register from 1862 to 1878, and Stair Agnew, Deputy Clerk Register from 1881 to 1909. Matthew Livingston, author of the calendar of SAS charters mentioned above, was a both fellow of SAS and a keeper at the Register House until 1903.⁵³

Yet Marinell Ash suggests that the 1840s witnessed the beginnings of a sea change in the SAS's interests, from a broad engagement with all aspects of the past to a narrower focus on monuments, excavations and artefacts. She illustrates that through the friendship between David Laing and Daniel Wilson. In Ash's words, 'if David Laing was the last of the great traditional antiquaries, then Daniel Wilson was the first of a new archaeological breed'.⁵⁴ Laing is certainly a great example of the unified view which Scottish antiquaries took of their work during the middle decades of the century. He was a stalwart of publishing Clubs like the Bannatyne and Maitland, and a prolific editor of literary material and historical documents. Between 1839 and 1868 he acted as the SAS's secretary, then treasurer, then VP. He also edited the Society's publications from the 1830s to the 1870s, presiding over an era in which material culture became by far the most common topic of discussion. Indeed, Laing has been credited as the architect of both the Bannatyne Club's and the SAS's success in the 1830s and 40s.⁵⁵ Laing's friend Wilson also took on a leading role in the SAS before moving to Canada in 1853. But whilst Laing's centre of gravity lay with texts Wilson was concerned more with prehistoric and early Christian sites and artefacts. To an extent therefore Ash's analysis is correct; Wilson did set the tone for a newly systematic approach to material remains in Scotland. But he was also a traditional antiquary, able to discuss multiple periods and types of source with authority. His most celebrated works are the *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland* (1851) and *Prehistoric Man: Researches into the Origin of Civilisation* (2 vols., 1862). The former was influenced by Scandinavian archaeology and the latter by Canadian

⁵¹ For example C. Innes, 'Notice of the Crozier of St Moluach, the property of the Duke of Argyll', *PSAS*, 2 (1859), pp. 12-4; *idem.*, 'Notice of a tomb on the hill of Roseisle, Morayshire, recently opened; also of the chambered cairns and stone circles at Clava, on Nairnside', *PSAS*, 3 (1862), pp. 46-50.

⁵² C. Innes, 'Suggestions of objects of archaeological interest in the West of Scotland', *Transactions of the Glasgow Archaeological Society*, 1, 5 (1863), pp. 309-325.

⁵³ Marsden, *Cosmo Innes*, pp. 55-90; M. Young, 'The age of the deputy clerk register, 1806-1928', *SHR*, 53 (1974), pp. 157-93, at 171-86; J. Miner, 'Joseph Robertson and the Scottish middle ages', *Innes Review*, 32 (1981), pp. 34-54; *General Index and List of Illustrations to the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Vols. I-XXIV, 1851-1890* (Edinburgh, 1892), pp. v-xxxii.

⁵⁴ M. Ash, '"A fine, genial, hearty band": David Laing, Daniel Wilson and Scottish Archaeology', in Bell, *Scottish Antiquarian Tradition*, pp. 86-113, at 101.

⁵⁵ M. Ash, 'David Laing', pp. 9-14

ethnology, but in their universalist frameworks and assumptions about societal progress both sit within a pre-existing tradition of Enlightened antiquarianism.⁵⁶ Meanwhile his *Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time* (2 volumes, 1848) combined detailed descriptions of the city's architecture with documentary research into the histories of those who had lived in those buildings. Ash labels it 'a late example of the antiquarian impulse – a book of tales and gossip centred on a physical place and arranged in an unsystematic and discursive way'.⁵⁷ Whilst almost all of his contributions to the *PSAS* dealt with artefacts, sites or buildings, even into the 1890s many were informed by documentary scholarship.⁵⁸ He wrote books about Oliver Cromwell and Thomas Chatterton, was a talented artist and prolific reviewer of fiction and poetry, and his Chair at the University of Toronto was in History and English Literature.⁵⁹ Wilson was thus very much the antiquarian polymath, bestriding numerous areas of expertise that are today seen as discrete disciplines.

Nevertheless, it was in the study of prehistory that Wilson had the most influence and it was in that area that Joseph Anderson would take up the baton later in the century. Anderson was another central figure in the history of the SAS and is often seen as the progenitor of modern Scottish archaeology.⁶⁰ Yet even he was adept at working with written sources. He edited *Orkneyinga Saga* in 1873 and in 1879 published a history of the Olyphynt family in which the narrative itself was dwarfed by 360 pages of medieval and early modern transcripts. In 1887 he gave a paper to the SAS on the confessions of women tried for witchcraft in Forfar in 1661, subsequently published with long extracts from the confessions themselves.⁶¹ Even Anderson, who built his reputation on excavation and artefact analysis, understood his antiquarian remit to encompass texts as well. That said, he did open the door to a new breed of antiquary focused much more exclusively on the prehistoric era than had hitherto been the case. These included Robert Munro, secretary of the SAS from 1886 to 1899 and best known for his work on crannogs, and John Abercromby, an expert on bronze age pottery who was president of the SAS from 1913 to 1916.⁶² Yet even in this later period, the SAS was still

⁵⁶ M. Ash, 'Old books, old castles and old friends: the making of Daniel Wilson's *Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*', in E. Hulse (ed.), *Thinking With Both Hands: Sir Daniel Wilson in the Old World and the New* (Toronto, 1999), pp. 60-80; B. Trigger, 'Prehistoric Man and Daniel Wilson's later Canadian ethnology', in Hulse, *Thinking With Both Hands*, pp. 81-100.

⁵⁷ M. Ash, K. Cruft and E. Hulse, 'Daniel Wilson, antiquarian of Edinburgh: a sense of place', in Hulse, *Thinking With Both Hands*, pp. 42-59, at 42, see also 45-46.

⁵⁸ For example D. Wilson, 'St Ninian's Suburb, and the Collegiate Church of the Holy Trinity, founded at Edinburgh by Queen Mary of Gueldres, the Widow of James II, in 1462', *PSAS*, 18 (1884), pp. 128-70; *idem.*, 'Notice of St Margaret's Chapel, Edinburgh Castle', *PSAS*, 21 (1887), pp. 291-316; *idem.*, 'Queen Mary and the Legend of the Black Turnpike', *PSAS*, 24 (1890), pp. 415-35.

⁵⁹ H. Murray, 'Daniel Wilson as Litterateur. English Professor, Critic and Poet', in Hulse, *Thinking with Both Hands*, pp. 211-233; R. Stacey, '"In some form, my life-pursuit": Daniel Wilson, Artist', in Hulse, *Thinking With Both Hands*, pp. 234-259.

⁶⁰ Clarke, 'Foremost figure in all matters'; Graham, 'Joseph Anderson'; Clarke, 'Scottish archaeology', pp. 135-6.

⁶¹ Stevenson, 'The Museum part II', pp. 158-9; J. Anderson, 'The confessions of the Forfar witches (1661)', *PSAS*, 22 (1888), pp. 241-262.

⁶² E. N. Fallaize, 'Obituary: Dr Robert Munro', *Nature*, vol. 105, no. 2648 (29 July 1920), pp. 685-686; *PSAS* 59 (1925), pp. 4-6; Piggott and Robertson, *Three Centuries*, nos. 82 and 91 [n. p.].

used as a forum to discuss written evidence from more recent eras. Between 1893 and 1908 John Dowden contributed nine papers to the *PSAS*, all of them relating to the pre-Reformation church and based on ecclesiastical records.⁶³ Dowden also delivered the SAS's annual Rhind lectures in 1901, on 'The Constitution, Organisation, and Law of the Medieval Church in Scotland'. Indeed, the period 1886-1914 saw Rhind Lectures on the Privy Council of Scotland, Edward I and Edward II, Queen Mary, Scotland's public records, early Scottish chronicles, the feudal system, and medieval liturgy. 1931 saw a series on monastic life, whilst in 1942 and 1945 the topics were medieval jurisdictions and the Scottish burghs.⁶⁴ That said the majority of Rhind Lectures, from their inauguration in 1874 onwards, dealt with topics we would today consider archaeological. This supports the view that, although textual scholarship maintained a place in SAS activities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it constituted a minor strand.

This was partly due to the institutional split that began with the Bannatyne, Maitland and Spalding Clubs in the 1820s and 30s and continued in later decades with the foundation of a new wave of historical societies. The Grampian Club and the Scottish Burgh Record Society were both founded in 1868, followed in 1871 by the Hunterian Club.⁶⁵ The following decade witnessed the birth of the Aungervyle Society in 1881, the Scottish Text Society and the Clarendon Historical Society in 1882, and the Scottish History Society (henceforth SHS) and the New Spalding Club in 1886.⁶⁶ The Edinburgh Bibliographical Society and the Scottish Record Society followed in 1890 and 1897 respectively.⁶⁷ These new associations were created in the image of their predecessors; both the Grampian Club and the Aungervyle Society used the old formula of 'literature, history and antiquities' in their constitutions. Occasionally they produced volumes dealing with material culture, such as Alexander Ogston's *Prehistoric Antiquities of the Howe of Cromar* (1931).⁶⁸ By and large, however,

⁶³ For example J. Dowden, 'Notes on the True Date of the October Festival of St Regulus of St Andrews, as bearing on the suggested Identification of St Regulus and the Irish St Riaghail', *PSAS*, 27 (1893), pp. 247-54; *idem.*, 'Boyamund's Valuation of Ecclesiastical Benefices in the Archdeaconry of Lothian (1274-1275); with an alphabetical list of the more difficult place-names in the accounts for the second year (1275-1276)', *PSAS*, 42 (1908), pp. 40-55; see also Rowan Strong, 'Dowden, John (1840-1910), Scottish Episcopal bishop of Edinburgh and scholar', *ODNB* (online).

⁶⁴ 'List of 133 lecturers', *Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* (2012), https://web.archive.org/web/20110722055840/http://www.socantscot.org/content/documents/public_rhind_lecturers_list.doc, accessed 12 December 2018.

⁶⁵ H. Streeves, *Learned Societies and English Literary Scholarship in Great Britain and the United States* (New York, 1913), p. 135; J. Marwick (ed.), *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh 1403-1528* (Edinburgh, 1869), p. 1; J. Murdoch, *Concluding Part of the Hunterian Club Issues* (Edinburgh, 1902), p. iii.

⁶⁶ *Papers relating to the Aungervyle society, 1881-84*. (Edinburgh, 1884), p. 2; W. Menzies, 'The Scottish Text Society 1882-1932', in *Scottish Text Society Miscellany* (Edinburgh, 1933), p. 6; *Scientific and Learned Societies of Great Britain: A Handbook Compiled from Official Sources* (London, 1884), p. 165; *The Miscellany of the New Spalding Club*. (Aberdeen, 1890), p. 3.

⁶⁷ *Publications of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society: Papers 1890-95* (Edinburgh, 1896), p. 3; F. Grant (ed.), *The Commissariat Record of Edinburgh: Record of Testaments Part II*, (Edinburgh, 1898), after title-page, preparatory note and list of executive members, n. p.

⁶⁸ A. Ogston (ed.), *Prehistoric Antiquities of the Howe of Cromar* (Aberdeen, 1931).

these new societies published written sources. The new level of specificity with which the SHS spelled out its mission was indicative of that; it was constituted for ‘the discovery and printing, under selected editorship, of unpublished documents illustrative of the civil, religious, and social history of Scotland’.⁶⁹ It was not that the SAS rejected written sources, therefore. Rather this welter of clubs and societies, set up with constitutional and financial models geared specifically towards the printing and circulation of historical documents on a scale with which the SAS could not compete, simply occupied that territory.⁷⁰ Moreover, many of the SHS’s leading lights were also involved with the SAS, just as had been the case for the original publishing clubs. The Earl of Rosebery and David Masson were respectively President and Chair of Council for the SHS, but both were also fellows of the SAS. Eneas Mackay was on the Councils of both the SHS and the SAS, Arthur Mitchell and Thomas Dickson were on the SHS’s council and at the same time held the offices of VP and secretary respectively in the SAS. Other eminent members of the SAS, such as William Forbes Skene and John Dowden, also sat on the SHS’s council.⁷¹

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Scottish antiquarian scene was dominated by a relatively small coterie of individuals. There were relatively few individuals wealthy and interested enough to devote significant chunks of time to antiquarian pursuits, and there was a paucity of paid employment for such work. The result was that these men were able to move smoothly between different arenas within the wider antiquarian sphere. Whilst by the end of the century antiquaries might specialise in texts or objects, history or prehistory, they still saw their work as part of a wider antiquarian endeavour. That said, the institutional splits discussed above became more pronounced in the closing decades of the century. An examination of two new antiquarian publications appearing in the 1880s helps to illustrate the impact of that development. *Northern Notes and Queries* included the border counties of England, but its emphasis was predominantly on Scotland. It was printed in Edinburgh and cited the institution of the SHS that same year as an impetus for its own creation.⁷² *Scottish Notes and Queries*, meanwhile, was an Aberdeen publication designed to focus particularly on north-eastern Scotland. Its opening issue specifically aligned it with Hill Burton, Innes, Robertson and Stuart, who had founded the Spalding Club in 1839. It invited contributions from ‘antiquaries, archaeologists, artists, bibliographers, ecclesiologists, philologists, as well as scientists generally’.⁷³

⁶⁹ W. Macleod, (ed.), *A List of Persons Concerned in the Rebellion, Transmitted to the Commissioners by the Several Supervisors in Scotland in Obedience to a General Letter the 7th May 1746* (Edinburgh, 1890), unnumbered page detailing society rules at end of volume; see also A. Tindley, ‘The Scottish History Society: 130 Years of Promoting the Best in Scottish History Scholarship’, *Scottish Archives*, 21 (2015), pp. 8-17, at 10-12.

⁷⁰ Ross, ‘Bannatyne Club’, pp. 203-210.

⁷¹ MacLeod, *List of Persons Concerned in the Rebellion*, unnumbered page detailing society office-holders at end of volume; *PSAS*, 24 (1890), pp. xii-xiv and xix-xxxiv.

⁷² *Northern Notes and Queries*, 1, 1 (1886), pp. 1-2.

⁷³ *Scottish Notes and Queries*, 1, 1 (1887), p. 1.

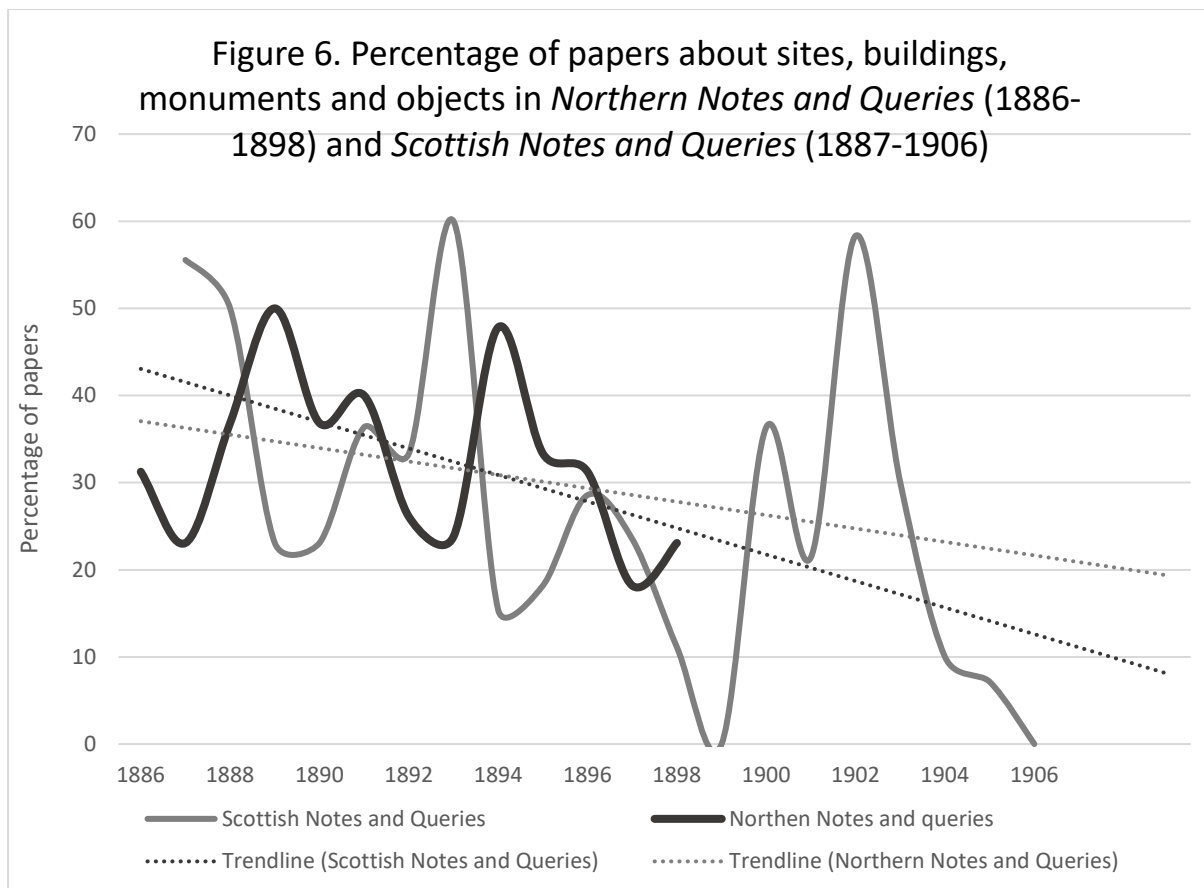


Figure 6 shows that contributions to these publications relating primarily to Scotland's material remains were an important element in the business of both during the 1880s.⁷⁴ However, their number and significance declined in the 1890s and 1900s, an inversion of the decrease in scholarship on written sources seen in the *PSAS* in the same period. Furthermore, the work on sites and objects that did appear in *Northern Notes and Queries* and *Scottish Notes and Queries* related overwhelmingly to the medieval and early modern eras. Pieces on the prehistoric period were extremely rare.⁷⁵ This implies that what we would today call 'historical archaeology' remained part of an antiquarian sphere that was increasingly centred on documentary research. But prehistoric archaeology was, by the final decade of the century, becoming a more distinct sub-field. Evidently that process was as much about periods as sources, a point which the following section will address.

⁷⁴ Figure 6 is based on the titles of papers published in *Northern Notes and Queries* from its inception in 1886 to 1898 when it shifted to a long-form article format, and in *Scottish Notes and Queries* from its launch in 1897 to 1906 when it went on a seventeen-year hiatus. The findings represent only contributions listed as 'notes' or 'minor notes', and do not include 'queries' or 'answers'. They are based on an annual sampling of these quarterly publications, using the summer issue to indicate the direction of travel. It is acknowledged that some papers draw upon both written and material evidence; in such instances the findings represent the primary approach used in each paper.

⁷⁵ Using the sampling technique and date ranges upon which Figure 6 is based, only two pieces dealing with unequivocally pre-Roman topics can be found across both publications; Anon., 'On the trail of Palaeolithic man', *Northern Notes and Queries*, 10, 37 (1895), pp. 82-8; Anon., 'Relics of the bronze age', *Scottish Notes and Queries*, 2nd series, 2, 1 (1900), pp. 6-7.

Changing definitions of archaeology

The use of the label 'archaeological' by the founders of antiquarian societies like the GAS and the AWAA shows that, during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the term was synonymous with broad-based antiquarianism. Both societies undertook research that we would now consider historical, and in the case of the GAS that continued well into the 1920s. The *OED* suggests that the word had two meanings during the 1800s. The older one, for which the latest example given is from 1869, is 'ancient history generally; systematic description or study of antiquities'. The newer meaning, for which the earliest example provided is dated 1847, is 'the scientific study of the remains and monuments of the prehistoric period'.⁷⁶ In Scottish antiquarian circles, however, that shift in meaning took longer and was more contested than those two definitions suggest. It was in the older sense that David Laing used the term in his 1831 and 1861 addresses tracing the history of the SAS. In both pieces he makes occasional use of it with reference to all elements of the Society's interests; there is no sense that the label should be applied only to physical remains or prehistory.⁷⁷ Cosmo Innes rarely used the term, preferring to talk instead about 'antiquaries'. But he shared Laing's assumption about the breadth of the antiquarian enterprise. In addresses to the SAS in 1858 and 1862 on the state of Scottish antiquarianism, he focused primarily on the documentary material in which he specialised. Nonetheless, in both instances he devoted considerable time to prehistoric sites and artefacts and, in his 1862 lecture, offered detailed advice on the display of artefacts in the museum.⁷⁸ Innes was also, along with Joseph Robertson who was also an expert on medieval diplomatics, on a small committee formed in the 1850s to oversee the arrangement of the museum.⁷⁹

For men like Innes, Robertson and Laing, antiquarianism was a continuum. The following quote from 1862, in which Innes discuss a hypothetical Scottish gentleman, encapsulates his adherence to that older view of the antiquary as provincial polymath, reconstructing the past from whatever materials come to hand.

The church where he worships, where his forefathers are buried, has its history in those old title-deeds. All that is known of the village and the mill which he looks down upon from his drawing-room window, is to be found there. He finds the age of his woods-the expense it cost his forefathers to make the place which is now his. His interest soon extends, and there isn't a cairn or a standing-stone in the parish with which he is not familiar.⁸⁰

James Y. Simpson, surgeon and SAS VP, took a comparable view in his 1860 'address on archaeology'. Inverting the emphases found in Innes's addresses, Simpson dwelt mainly on

⁷⁶ 'Archaeology' *OED* (online); see also Schnapp, 'Antiquarians and archaeologists', p. 396; Buchanan, A., 'Science and Sensibility; architectural antiquarianism in the early nineteenth century', in Peltz and Myrone, *Producing the Past*, pp. 169-186, at 173.

⁷⁷ D. Laing, 'Progress of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland from 1784 to 1830', *Archaeologia Scotica*, 3 (1831), pp. v-xxxi, at xiii, xviii and xxix; Laing, 'Anniversary address', pp. 6, 9, 29, 36.

⁷⁸ C. Innes, 'Opening address', *PSAS*, 3 (1862), pp. 3-8; C. Innes, 'Annual address', *PSAS*, 5 (1865), pp. 196-212.

⁷⁹ Stevenson, 'The museum, part II', pp. 146.

⁸⁰ Innes, 'Annual address', p. 206.

material culture, both prehistoric and more recent, but also discussed written sources. In his own words:

Archaeology has sedulously sat down among the old and forbidding stores of musty, and often nearly illegible manuscripts, charters, cartularies, records, letters, and other written documents, that have been accumulating for hundreds of years in the public and private collections of Europe, and has most patiently and laboriously culled from them annals and facts having the most direct and momentous bearing upon the acts and thoughts of our medieval forefathers.

The address also lionised the publishing clubs, referred to the recently discovered Book of Deer as a ‘Scottish archaeological document’, and labelled books by Cosmo Innes and Robert Chambers, based on research with medieval and early modern documents, as ‘systematic works on Scottish archaeology’. However, Simpson also has much to say about the significance of prehistoric archaeology. He refers to archaeology and geology as ‘two allied and almost continuous sciences’ and advocates a methodological distinction between the prehistoric and historical eras based on their differing sets of sources.⁸¹

In suggesting that delineation Simpson was building on discussions that had already begun to take place in the SAS during the 1850s. In 1852 the judge and SAS VP John Murray tentatively suggested a typological demarcation between the study of ‘authentic historic documents’ and ‘those other evidences [...] which are stored in the ruder antiquities of primitive ages.’ He referred to this development as ‘a new era in the history of archaeological investigations’.⁸² In 1856 the Free Church minister William Lindsay Alexander, another SAS VP, used a paper to his Society brethren to criticise the broad conception of ‘archaeology’ favoured by the likes of Laing and Innes. It had, he felt, ‘betrayed some into a wider conception of what we aim at [...] than is, in my humble opinion, at all favourable to the success of our pursuits’. He argued that archaeologists should confine their studies to specific themes, whether working with manuscripts or investigating physical remains.⁸³ Alexander thus favoured specialisation and disliked the dilettantism implied by attempts to gain mastery in all areas. In 1862 Charles Neaves, another judge and SAS VP, made comparable points. He argued that the study of the past could be divided into the periods for which records exist, and those for which they do not. He explained that for the later epoch the antiquary’s sources included the physical as well as the written, for instance monuments, seals, coins, tapestries and manuscript illuminations. Whilst the prehistoric era was ‘calculated to excite a more speculative and philosophical interest’, the ‘period that lies within the range of historical record has a more special and a more individual attraction’.⁸⁴

The words of Murray, Alexander and Neaves are early intimations of the disciplinary split to come, although there was as yet no consensus over whether those distinctions should be defined by source or period. Nevertheless, all three still envisaged such specialisms, including the study of records and manuscripts, as elements within an encompassing

⁸¹ J. Simpson, ‘Address on archaeology’, *PSAS*, 4 (1863), pp. 5-51, at 6, 7, 13, 15, 42; See also M. Nicolson, ‘Simpson, Sir James Young, first baronet (1811–1870), physician and obstetrician’, ODNB (online).

⁸² J. Murray, ‘Anniversary address’, *PSAS*, 1 (1855), pp. 97-100, at 97-8.

⁸³ W. L. Alexander, ‘Opening address’, *PSAS*, 2 (1859), pp. 298-304, at 301-3.

⁸⁴ C. Neaves, ‘Opening address’, *PSAS*, 3 (1862), pp. 152-7, at 153 and 156; C. Neaves, ‘Archaeology, its aims and uses’ *PSAS*, 3 (1862), pp. 325-38, at 329-30.

definition of archaeology that matches Ritter's characterisation of antiquarianism.. It was that catholic interpretation of the archaeological remit that we have already seen played out in the publications of the GAS well into the twentieth century. It was also explicitly advanced by some of that society's leading members. In 1883 William Euing exhorted GAS members to focus their attention on the records of Kirk Sessions, the histories of universities and schools, early modern crime statistics, the impact of the vernacular Bible during the Reformation, and the state of literature, arts and trade since the Middle Ages.⁸⁵ The same year John Young, Professor of Natural History at Glasgow University, argued at a GAS meeting that 'It is impossible to fix the limits of archaeology'. He went on to say:

'A fashion has crept in of restricting archaeology to gatherings from the more remote periods, and to speak of more recent things as antiquities. The custom is to be deprecated, for the studies are on the same lines in all cases; in all cases have the same human interest'

Whilst he emphasised the need to identify and preserve prehistoric sites and objects, he also wrote: 'nor does our work end with field observation, our lawyers have much in their power; old title deeds give topographical and genealogical information of value'.⁸⁶ Here Young robustly defended the older, wider meaning of archaeology. But the fact that he felt impelled to do so suggests that a narrower definition was gaining ground. In 1865 John Stuart had given a paper to the GAS on the 'recent progress of archaeology'. In a twenty-four-page tract, 'chronicles, records, and letters' received just a single paragraph; the rest focused on sites, structures and artefacts.⁸⁷ That is particularly telling given that Stuart was a recognised authority on both written records and early Christian monuments.

In an 1887 paper entitled 'Scottish Archaeology, its past and future', the GAS's leading light Robert Cochran-Patrick attempted to reach a rapprochement between these two viewpoints. He argued that archaeology should focus mainly on the material culture of the prehistoric and early Christian ages. Yet his lecture also surveyed recent developments in relation to public, ecclesiastical, burghal and familial records, concluding that section with the words 'such is a very brief outline of what has already been accomplished in the progress of archaeology in Scotland'. However, he felt that the bulk of the work in that area had already been done, and it was therefore upon prehistory that the GAS should focus its efforts.⁸⁸ Given that Cochran-Patrick worked mainly on the Middle Ages, as both a record scholar and an expert in numismatics, this was a significant admission.⁸⁹ The very next year Joseph Anderson delivered a paper to the GAS on 'The systematic study of Scottish archaeology'. There he focused entirely on the prehistoric period and argued that it was only by studying the 'earlier infancy' of societies that scholars could properly understand their present-day

⁸⁵ W. Euing, 'Observations of the proceedings of the Glasgow Archaeological Society and its present position', *Transactions of the GAS*, 1st series, 2 (1883), pp. 57-9.

⁸⁶ J.. Young, 'The study of archaeology', *Transactions of the GAS*, 1st series, 2 (1883), pp. 131-7, at 131, 134 and 137.

⁸⁷ J. Stuart, 'Recent progress of archaeology', *Transactions of the GAS*, 1st series, 1, 4 (1866), pp. 3-27, at 8.

⁸⁸ R. Cochran-Patrick, 'Archaeology in Scotland; its past and future', *Transactions of the GAS*, 2nd series, 1 (1888), pp. 355-75, at 365-6.

⁸⁹ Mearns, 'Glasgow Archaeological Society', pp. ix-x; G. Stronach, rev. H. Colin Matthew, 'Patrick, Robert William Cochran- (1842–1897), politician', ODNB (online).

manifestations.⁹⁰ Here we see the fulfilment of that embryonic distinction between history and prehistory, and thereby between physical and textual remains, first suggested by SAS members some three decades earlier. It was Anderson's understanding of archaeology, rather than Euing's or Young's, that would ultimately win out. Nevertheless, the high levels of document-based research that continued to be published in the *TGAS*, right up until the 1920s, shows that the society's officeholders, as well as many of the antiquaries who contributed to its volumes, disagreed with that assessment.

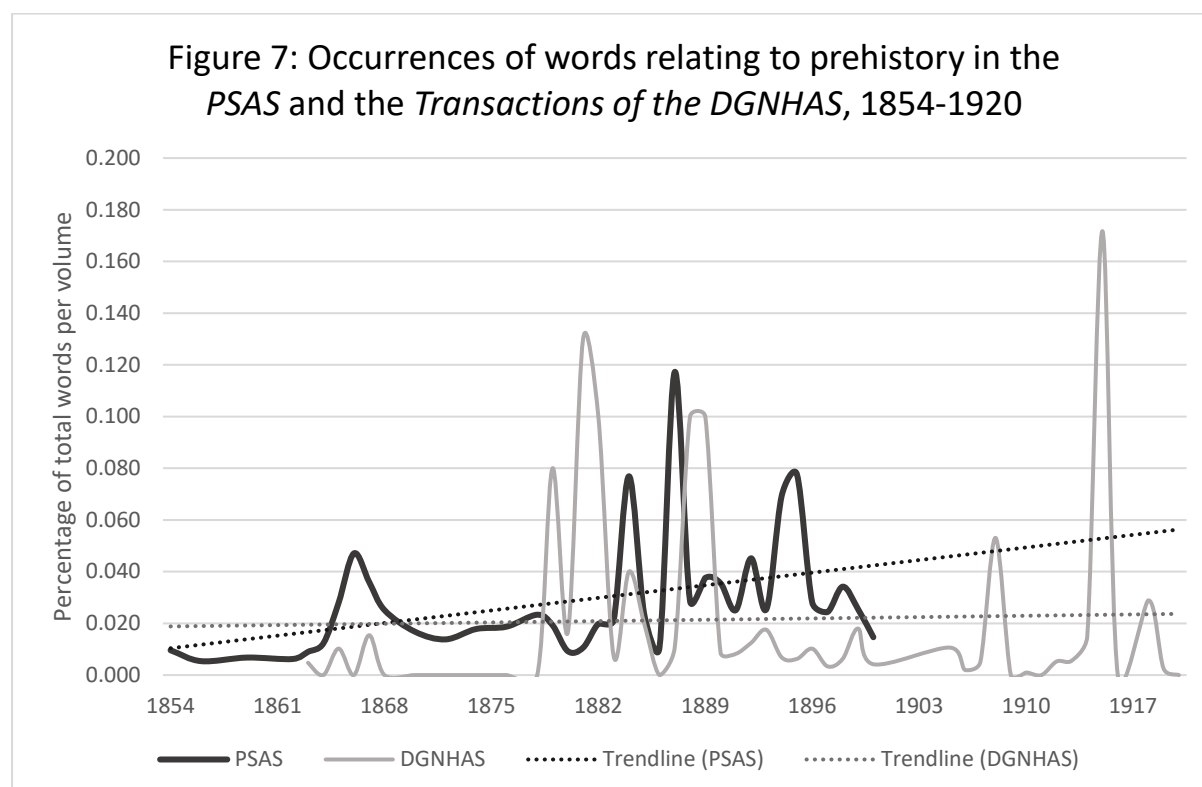


Figure 7 further illustrates these complexities. It compares the use of terms commonly associated with the study of prehistory in the *PSAS* and the *Transactions of the DGNHAS*,⁹¹ It reveals that, from the 1860s onwards, the investigation of prehistory was an increasingly significant strand in the activities of both societies. Moreover, this was more the case for the SAS, perhaps because members of the metropolitan society were better placed than their provincial counterparts to undertake excavation and access collections large enough to support the comparative analysis of artefacts. The rising number of occurrences in the publications of both societies also speaks to the development of a specialised vocabulary for discussion of prehistory. That said, the difference between the two societies was by no means

⁹⁰ J. Anderson, 'The systematic study of Scottish archaeology'; *Transactions of the GAS*, 2nd series, 1 (1888), pp. 342-54, at 353.

⁹¹ The results in Figure 7 illustrate the cumulative totals of searches in DGNHAS and SAS volumes for the following terms: prehistoric, bronze age, iron age, stone age, Neolithic, Palaeolithic. These were plotted using AntConc textual analysis software, working with OCR'd PDFs of the volumes. Derivations were included through the use of wildcard characters. The figures shown are percentages of the total number of words in the volume. The data is based on a comparison of SAS and DGNHAS volumes for the period in which both were being published and full runs of both are available in electronic format.

huge. It is certainly not the case that prehistory became the predominant preserve of a specialist metropolitan elite, and in fact the highest point on the graph relates to a DGNHAS volume published in 1915. Moreover, we have already seen that the use of terms relating to the documentary scholarship were in the same period also on the rise in the *Transactions* of the DGNHAS. In that society there was, at an organisational level at least, apparently no pressure to specialise in one period or one type of source.

The brief convergence of history and archaeology

In his 1887 address to the GAS, Cochran-Patrick claimed that ‘the historian deals with records chiefly, and objects are of secondary importance; but the archaeologist has to deal with objects only’.⁹² Distinguishing between the work of the historians and that of the archaeologist was not new. However, basing that distinction on a typology of sources was relatively novel. Back in 1859 Alexander had identified everyday life as the territory of the archaeologist, as opposed to the high politics and grand narratives focused on by historians. He then asked, ‘is it not at the hand of the antiquary that the historian must receive the materials out of which he is to construct this part of his edifice’.⁹³ It was this outlook that enabled men like Laing, Simpson and Young to label research with ecclesiastical charters, burgh records and family papers ‘archaeological’; the definition was informed by the subject matter rather than the sources. In 1862, meanwhile, Neaves noted that historians should, ‘present from time to time a picture of the social condition and mental character of the great body of the people’ and stated that ‘it is the antiquary who must supply this information’.⁹⁴ Later that year he wrote:

History has for its office the ascertainment, narration, and philosophy of past events. The antiquary's business rather is with the customs and manners, the opinions and usages, and the physical monuments and memorials of former ages’.⁹⁵

Such views stand in marked contrast to the typological and evidential delineation advanced by Cochran-Patrick. Their origins lay in the eighteenth century, when the relationship between history-writing and antiquarianism was overtly fractious. Those labelling themselves ‘historians’ saw their work as philosophical and literary. The deployment of evidence came a poor third to rigour of argument and cohesion of narrative. They consequently took a dim-view of the antiquarian predilection for arcane sources which could furnish only a messy and incomplete picture of the past at best.⁹⁶ As Alexandra Buchanan puts it, antiquarianism was often dismissed as ‘any relationship with the past which seeks rather to describe and categorise its physical remains than to draw from them any wider message or moral’.⁹⁷ The

⁹² Cochran-Patrick, ‘Archaeology in Scotland’, p. 366.

⁹³ Alexander ‘Opening address’, p. 302

⁹⁴ Neaves, ‘Opening address’, pp. 152-7.

⁹⁵ Neaves, ‘Archaeology, its aims and uses’, p. 326.

⁹⁶ Sweet, *Antiquaries*, pp. 2-3; S. Crane, ‘Passionate Collector’, pp. 187-90. Bentley, *Modern Historiography*, pp. 8-15 and 25-35; S. Manning, ‘Antiquarianism, the Scottish science of man, and the emergence of modern disciplinarity’, in L. Davis, I. Duncan and J. Sorensen (eds.), *Scotland and the Border of Romanticism* (Cambridge, 2004), 57-76; K. O’Brien and S. Manning, ‘Historiography, biography and identity’, in S. Manning, T. Clancy and M. Pittock (eds.), *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature 2: Enlightenment, Britain and Empire 1707-1918* (Edinburgh, 2007), pp. 143-52.

⁹⁷ Buchanan, ‘Science and sensibility’, p. 169.

extent to which Scotland's Enlightenment historians scorned primary sources has admittedly been overstated, but it was nevertheless not until the nineteenth century that they began, in Harry Ritter's words, 'to adopt the exacting scholarly methods for evaluating and classifying evidence that antiquarians had helped to devise'.⁹⁸

It was that process to which the words of Alexander and Neaves allude. By the time that Patrick Fraser Tytler produced the first volume of his *History of Scotland* (9 volumes, 1829-1843), some thirty years earlier, the connection between history-writing and antiquarianism had already become considerably closer. Tytler is best known as a narrative historian and in his youth had been close to the philosopher Dugald Stewart, often seen as the final flower of the Enlightenment. Stewart was an enthusiastic advocate of the kind of conjectural history that had put Scotland's eighteenth-century literati at odds with what they saw as the pedantic fact-sifting of the antiquary.⁹⁹ Yet Tytler was also embedded in the antiquarian culture of his day. He was a fellow of the SAS and delivered several papers at its meetings. He was a member of the Bannatyne club and in 1833 co-edited an edition of Hugh Mackay's memoir of the Glorious Revolution.¹⁰⁰ That expertise was evident on almost every page of his *History*. Unlike his Enlightenment forbears, Tytler supported his narrative with evidence from a vast array of written sources. Moreover, he began his history with the accession of Alexander III in 1249, stating that 'it is at this period that our national annals become particularly interesting to the general reader'.¹⁰¹ Late as that starting point may seem today, it was a full three centuries earlier than that of the previous comparable work. William Robertson's *History of Scotland* (3 volumes, 1759). Robertson began his narrative with the Battle of Solway Moss in 1542, writing off the entirety of the Scottish Middle Ages as 'the reign of pure fable and conjecture, [which] ought to be totally neglected, or abandoned to the industry and credulity of antiquarians'.¹⁰² Yet Robertson's work on the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V began with a 230-page disquisition on 'the progress of society in Europe from the subversion of the Roman Empire to the beginning of the Sixteenth Century'.¹⁰³ It was not, therefore, that he dismissed the medieval period per se, but only in the case of Scotland. This was partly due to a perceived lack of evidence, but was also because Scotland's Enlightenment literati saw the Pre-Reformation history of their own country as an embarrassing catalogue of superstition, barbarism, lawlessness and tyranny. Instead it was to the early history of England that they turned, seeing there the Whiggish grand narratives of constitutional development and the progress of liberty that they found so lacking in

⁹⁸ Ritter, *Concepts in History*, p. 15; See also D. Francesconi, 'William Robertson on Historical Causation and Unintended Consequences', *Cyber Review of Modern Historiography* (1999), <http://fupress.net/index.php/cromohs/article/view/15745/14631>, accessed 23 January 2019.

⁹⁹ J. Burgon, *A Memoir of Patrick Fraser Tytler* (London, 1859), pp. 34-5; J. Maruši, 'Dugald Stewart on Conjectural History and Human Nature', *Journal of Scottish Philosophy*, 15, 3 (2017), pp. 261-74.

¹⁰⁰ *Archaeologia Scotica*, 3 [Appendix], pp. 188-90; Laing, *Bannatyne Club Members*, p. 63; Ash, *Strange Death*, pp. 87-123.

¹⁰¹ P. F. Tytler, *History of Scotland* I, 9 vols. (Edinburgh, 1829), p. v.

¹⁰² W. Robertson, *The History of Scotland*, 21st edition, 3 vols. (1821, orig. 1759), I, p.203; quoted in Cheape, 'Objects as evidence', p. 62.

¹⁰³ W. Robertson, *A History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles the Fifth*, 2nd edition, 4 vols. (London, 1782, orig. 1769), I, p.1-230.

Scotland's more distant past.¹⁰⁴ Tytler was thus breaking new ground by taking his own narrative history of Scotland back to the thirteenth century.¹⁰⁵

It is therefore striking that John Hill Burton's *History of Scotland* (7 volumes, 1867-1870), appearing less than a quarter century after Tytler's final volume, began its tale a full thousand years earlier. The first four chapters, coming in at 172 pages and constituting well over a third of the first volume, are simply labelled 'the unrecorded ages'. They deal with a range of topics that would today be considered archaeological, including Roman camps and roads, vitrified forts, cairns, weapons and armour, stone circles, and sculptured stones.¹⁰⁶ Burton was clearly much more at ease discussing material remains than Tytler had been. Like Tytler, however, his centre of gravity lay in written material and his chapters feature frequent discussions of obscure sources.¹⁰⁷ Burton had been a founding member of the Spalding Club, and had edited volumes for the Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs as well as the Register House.¹⁰⁸ Like many of his contemporaries, he used the term 'archaeology' to refer to all areas of antiquarian activity. This ranged from 'archaeologists who have made it their business to search for the relics of the Roman sojourn in Scotland' to 'archaeologists who deal much in manuscript authorities'.¹⁰⁹ Burton thus subscribed to the older, broader definition of archaeology. Furthermore, in its earlier start date Burton's work, even more than Tytler's, was a riposte to the assumptions of his predecessors, who had turned away from Scotland's ancient and medieval past in favour of an Anglo-centric understanding of their nation's history. This was an attempt to rehabilitate Scotland's past by conferring upon it the legitimacy of the narrative form. As such, his work represents the coming together of antiquarian and historical traditions in thematic as well as methodological terms.

The success of that effort is illustrated by the fact that the histories of Scotland by Peter Hume Brown (3 volumes, 1899-1909) and Andrew Lang (4 volumes, 1900-1907) also start with the Roman occupation. Yet both men devoted only 3.5 percent and 4 percent of their works respectively to the first thousand years of Scottish history. That is a major shift from Burton's history, which spends 11.7 percent of its total page count on that early period. Meanwhile Robert Rait's volume *Scotland* (1911) gets from the Roman occupation to the eleventh century in just 12 pages from a total of 312.¹¹⁰ Moreover, the *Histories* of Hume

¹⁰⁴ M. Pittock, 'Historiography', in A. Broadie (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 258-79; M. Fry, 'The Whig interpretation of Scottish history', in I. Donnachie & C. Whatley (eds.), *The Manufacture of Scottish History* (Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 72-89.

¹⁰⁵ Lord Hailes' *Annals of Scotland* began with the death of Malcolm II in 1059, but that work was, as its name implies, a catalogue of events by year rather than a piece of literary history-writing; D. Dalrymple, Lord Hailes, *Annals of Scotland*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1776-1779).

¹⁰⁶ J. H. Burton, *History of Scotland from Agricola's Invasion to the Revolution of 1688*, 7 vols. (Edinburgh, 1867-70), I, pp. iii-iv.

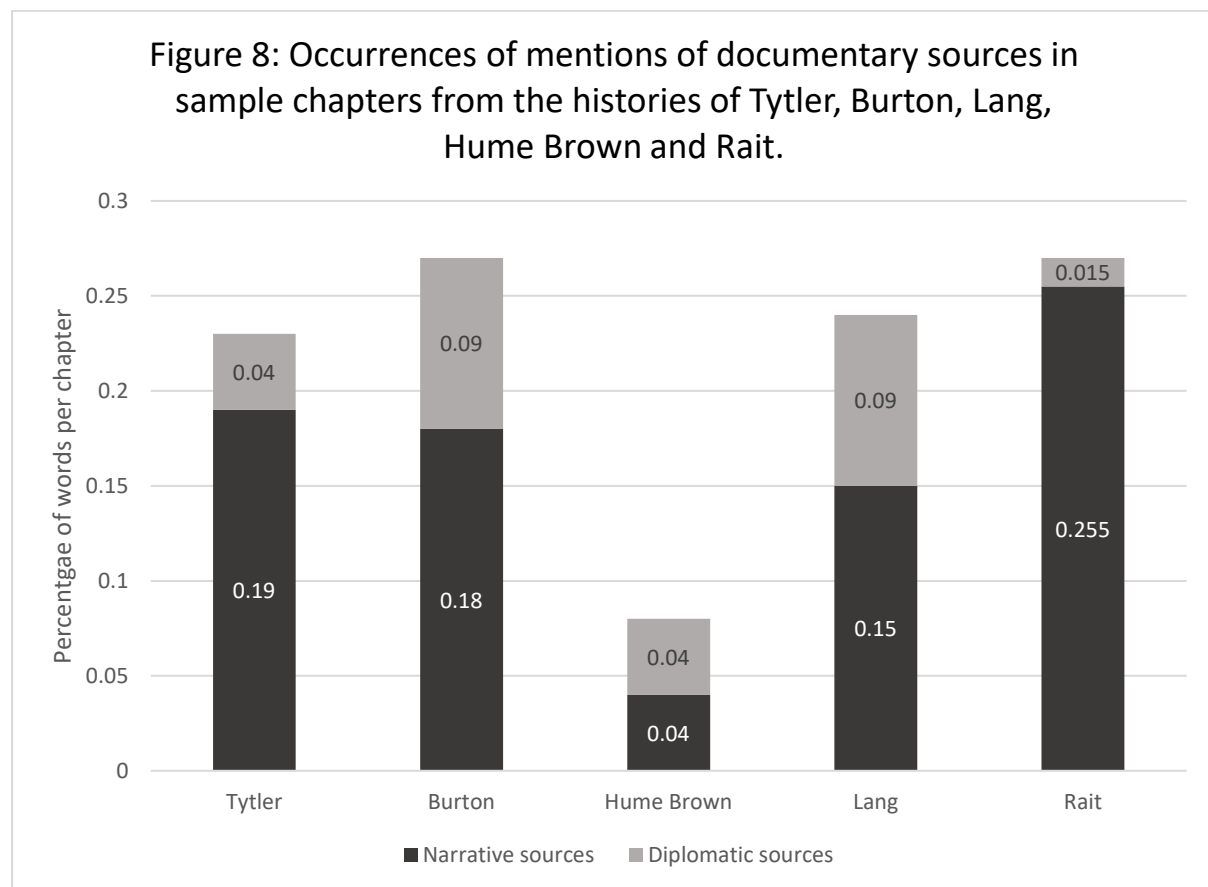
¹⁰⁷ For example, his survey of medieval laws found in manuscript sources, Burton, *History of Scotland* II, pp. 135-45; or his footnote on Robert Bruce's threat to the Guardians of Scotland should they choose John Baliol as king, which runs across three pages and consists of over a thousand words, *idem.*, *History of Scotland* II, pp. 119-21.

¹⁰⁸ Fry, 'Burton, John Hill', *ODNB*; Withrington, 'Aberdeen Antiquaries'.

¹⁰⁹ Burton, *History of Scotland* I, p. 49, II, p. 120.

¹¹⁰ P. Hume Brown, *History of Scotland*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1899-1909), 48 pages from a total of 1289; A. Lang, *A History of Scotland from the Roman Occupation* (London,

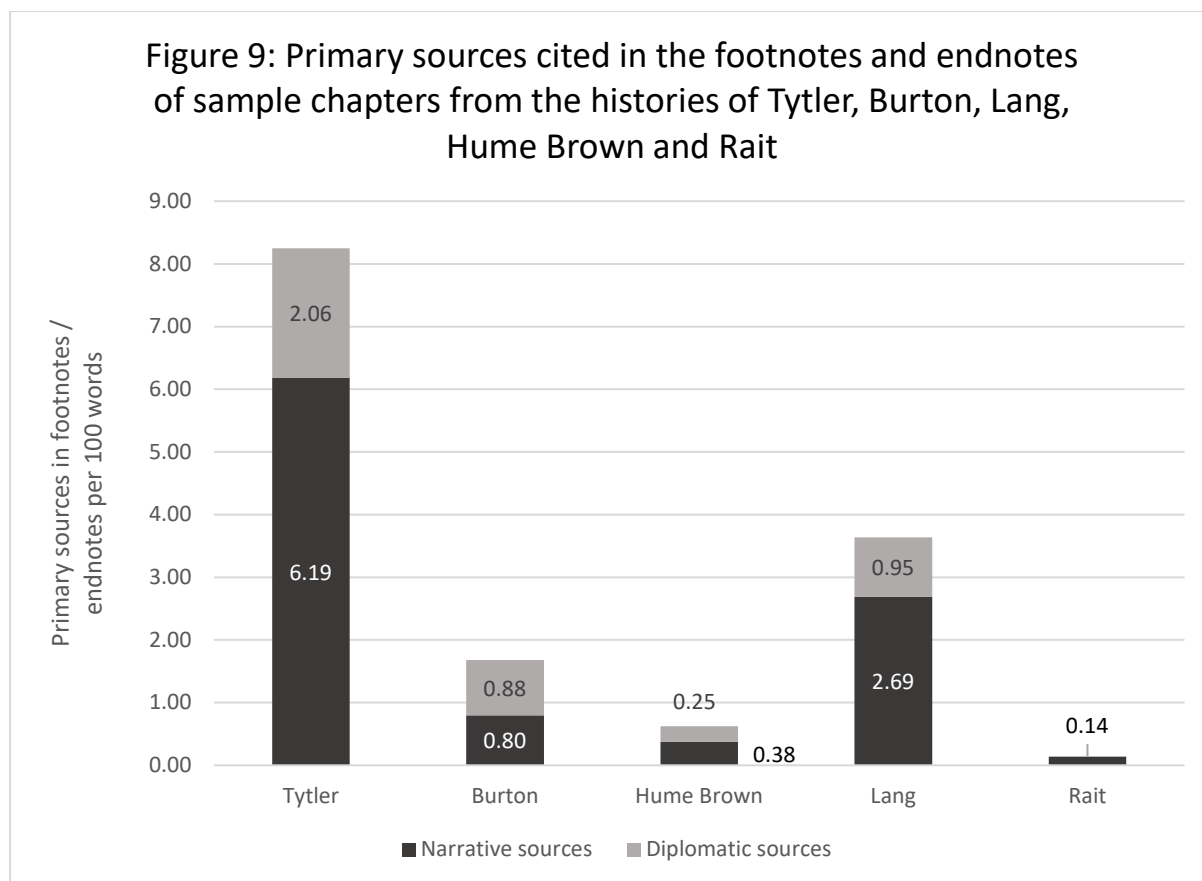
Brown and Rait are almost entirely narrative and event driven. Tytler and Burton, on the other hand, shift back and forth between narrative and descriptive modes of writing. Tytler, for example, interrupted the flow of his second volume to present a 249-page ‘historical enquiry into the ancient state and manners of Scotland’.¹¹¹ Burton meanwhile interspersed chapters named ‘Narrative down to...’ with discursive sections on topics such as ‘early Christianity’ and the ‘progress of the nation down to the Wars of Independence’.¹¹² Lang does the same, especially in his earlier sections, with chapters on ‘early culture in Scotland’ and ‘feudal Scotland’. These thematic discussions of Scotland’s social and cultural fabric are indicative of that interest in everyday life which Alexander and Neaves saw as part of the archaeologist’s remit regardless of whether the sources used to construct them were written or physical.



1900-1907), 85 pages from a total of 2110; Burton, meanwhile, spends 277 pages from a total of 3210; R. Rait, *Scotland* (London, 1911), pp. 1-12.

¹¹¹ Tytler, *History* II, pp. 197-446.

¹¹² Burton, *History* I, pp. 247-306, II, pp. 126-198.



Figures 8 and 9 further illustrate these differences.¹¹³ Figure 8 compares the frequency with which each historian uses common terms for documentary sources in sample chapters narrating events in the thirteenth century. Although this analysis does not include mentions of specific named sources, it does provide indicative results for comparison, especially when considered in conjunction with Figure 9 which compares the number of primary sources cited in footnotes or endnotes.¹¹⁴ Together these charts show that Tytler discussed and referenced his sources with relative frequency. Burton referenced considerably less but discussed sources in the main body of his text even more often. And Lang talks about his sources

¹¹³ The results shown in Figure 7 relate to the cumulative totals of searches in sample chapters from the histories by Tytler, Hill Burton, Hume Brown, Lang and Rait for the following terms: documents, texts, manuscripts, MSS, charters, carta, chartulary, register, chronicle, annal, instrument. These were plotted using AntConc textual analysis software, working with OCR'd PDFs of the volumes. Derivations were included through the use of wildcard characters. The figures shown are percentages of the total number of words in the volume. The results include both the main text and footnotes or endnotes. The use of chapters focusing on the thirteenth century was necessitated by the fact that Tytler's history starts with the reign of Alexander III. The chapters are Tytler, *History* I, chap. 1, pp. 1-62; Burton, *History* II, chap. XV, pp. 92-125; Hume Brown, *History* I, Book II, chap. III, pp. 110-32; Lang, *History* I, chap. V, pp. 88-130; Rait, *History* I, chap. 3, pp. 45-66.

¹¹⁴ Figure 9 is based on a count of the primary sources cited in the footnotes or endnotes of each chapter, factored down for a comparison per thousand words of text. It uses the same sample chapters as Figure 8. References to secondary works have not been counted

almost as much as Tytler and references them twice as often as Burton. He also includes appendices on topics such as the evolution of boroughs and the charters issued by Robert I, all based on detailed documentary analysis.¹¹⁵ Hume Brown, on the other hand, rarely mentions his sources either in his main text or his sparse footnotes. Instead he presents the narrative as an intellectual *fait accompli*, keeping its evidential base obscured and instead relying for authority on the expertise of its author. Rait, meanwhile, mentions written sources almost as often as Burton. Yet he provides almost no citations to support those passing remarks, which in any case relate overwhelmingly to chronicle sources rather than the charters, registers, and papers from which antiquaries habitually drew their discussions of everyday life. The rejection of references by Hume Brown and Rait is particularly telling given that the footnote was a piece of scholarly apparatus traditionally embraced by antiquaries but rejected by narrative historians as an affront to narrative flow.¹¹⁶

Arguably Tytler, Burton and also Lang sought to embed antiquarian forms of writing within the wider frameworks of narrative history. Hume Brown and Rait did so significantly less, yet it was they who held the first university professorships in Scottish History. These were founded at Edinburgh in 1901 (Hume Brown) and Glasgow in 1913 (Rait).¹¹⁷ By comparison Lang, who held no academic positions, is now often seen as a hangover from a less advanced historical tradition.¹¹⁸ However it is in Lang's volumes that we find the kind of antiquarian engagement with both material and textual sources that is largely missing from the work of Hume Brown and Rait.¹¹⁹ That is not to say that Lang's methods were more exacting or effective than those of his contemporaries, but rather the form of his work was more akin to that of Tytler and Burton.¹²⁰ Indeed, Hume Brown and Rait were both members of the SAS and Hume Brown delivered the 1893 Rhind lectures on 'Scotland in the time of Queen Mary'.¹²¹ Both men also had what would in earlier decades have been regarded as impressive antiquarian credentials. Hume Brown spent sixteen years as Burton's successor editing volumes of the *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*. Meanwhile Rait's *Parliaments of Scotland* (1924) was based on a formidable interrogation of the public records at the Register

¹¹⁵ Lang, *History I*, pp. 59-86, 131-160, 493-510.

¹¹⁶ Manning, 'Antiquarianism', pp. 65-6; Sweet, *Antiquaries*, pp. 6-8; A. Grafton, 'The Footnote from de Thou to Ranke', *History and Theory*, 33, 4 (1994), pp. 53-76.

¹¹⁷ D. Broun, 'A forgotten anniversary; P. Hume Brown's *History of Scotland*, 1911', in N. Evans and H. Pryce (eds.), *Writing a Small Nation's Past: Wales in Comparative Perspective 1850-1950*, (Abingdon, 2013), pp. 267-262; Kidd, 'Strange Death Revisited'.

¹¹⁸ C. Macdonald, 'Andrew Lang and Scottish historiography: taking on tradition', *SHR*, 94 (2015), pp. 207-236.

¹¹⁹ For representative instances of Lang's discussions of material culture see his chapter on 'early culture in Scotland', Lang, *History of Scotland I*, pp. 59-87. For an example of his use of primary documents, albeit from printed editions, see the notes to his chapter on the reign of James V', *idem.*, *History of Scotland I*, pp. 456-7.

¹²⁰ Indeed, Lang's misguided sally into a controversy over the authenticity of finds at Dumbuck Crannog on the Clyde are suggestive of an ill-informed credulity, see A. Lang, *The Clyde Mystery; a Study in Forgeries and Folklore* (Glasgow 1905); A. Hales and R. Sands, *Controversy on the Clyde: Archaeologists, Fakes and Forgers: the Excavation of Dumbuck Crannog* (Edinburgh, 2005).

¹²¹ *PSAS*, 36 (1902), p. 2; *PSAS*, 54 (1920), p. xxiii; 'List of 133 lecturers', *SAS website*.

House.¹²² When they wrote their narrative histories, that expertise undoubtedly informed what they produced. But unlike Lang, they were not willing to show that on the page. What this suggests is a resumption of the eighteenth-century dislocation between narrative history-writing and the antiquarian interrogation of sources. The kind of expertise that Hume Brown and Rait could claim, which would formerly have been considered antiquarian, had already become an integral element of the historian's toolkit and was central to his or her credibility.¹²³ In contrast to when Tytler and Burton were active, however, 'showing your workings', so to speak, had become the exception rather than the norm.

Conclusions

Scottish antiquarianism, and the disciplines of archaeology and history that grew from it, did not become appreciably professionalised or institutionalised in Scotland until the early 1900s. Whilst the Register House and the National Museum certainly employed experts, neither was large enough in the 1800s to support any significant level of professionalization. The individuals who did work for them arrived already trained, having cut their antiquarian teeth in organisations like the SAS and the publishing clubs.¹²⁴ In the universities, Chairs in History existed but their incumbents were, from the 1860s to the 1900s, required to teach English rather than Scottish history.¹²⁵ Archaeology, meanwhile, was not taught at Scottish universities during the nineteenth century, even in the classical form present at Oxford and Cambridge. It did not appear there until Robert Munro endowed an annual lecture series at Edinburgh in 1912. It took a further fifteen years for John Abercromby to follow Munro's lead by founding a chair of archaeology at the same university.¹²⁶ These developments represent the ascendancy of the specifically prehistoric form of archaeology practised by their founders. But they were also the result of individual philanthropy rather than any disciplinary imperative felt by the university itself. It was rather in the associational culture of Scottish antiquarianism that interest in the nation's history was kept alive. The broad polymathic approach that Scottish antiquaries took to investigating the past consequently remained relevant right up to the end of the century. That was particularly the case in provincial societies like the GAS and the DGNHAS. Even in the SAS, where excavation and artefactual analysis became the focus of activity from the 1860s onwards, archaeology was still not exclusively defined as the study of either material culture or prehistory. The dominant understanding of the term, from Laing in the 1830s to Young in the 1880s, was as a synonym for antiquarianism in its broadest sense. Archaeology could even, for a time, count the nation's most prominent narrative historians amongst its practitioners.

¹²² R. Rait, *Parliaments of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1924); J. Robertson, 'Hume Brown, Peter (1849-1918, historian', *ODNB* (online); D. Abbot, 'Rait, Sir Robert Sangster (1874-1936), historian and university principal', *ODNB* (online).

¹²³ M. Bentley, 'Shapes and patterns in British Historical Writing 1815-1945', in S. Macintyre, J. Maigushca & A. Pok (eds.), *The Oxford History of Historical Writing: Volume 4, 1800-1945* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 204-224.

¹²⁴ Young, 'Deputy clerk register'; Stevenson, 'The museum, part II'

¹²⁵ R. Anderson, 'University History Teaching, National Identity and Unionism in Scotland, 1862-1914', *SHR*, 91 (2012), pp. 1-41; B. Lenman, 'The Teaching of Scottish History in the Scottish Universities', *SHR*, 52 (1973), pp. 163-190, at 187-9; Marsden, *Cosmo Innes*, pp. 157-63.

¹²⁶ J. Malina and Z. Vasicek, *Archaeology Yesterday and Today: the Development of Archaeology in the Sciences and Humanities*, M. Zvelebil (trans.) (Cambridge, 1990), p. 45.

Susan Manning has identified resistance to disciplinarity as a hallmark of Enlightenment antiquarianism in Scotland.¹²⁷ This article suggests that this was still the case over a century later. Whilst the existence of publishing clubs and historical societies implies the opposite, that split was institutional rather than disciplinary; specialisms in certain periods or types of source continued to operate within a unified antiquarian sphere. Even in the 1880s, when label ‘archaeology’ began to be used to refer specifically to the study of the prehistoric past, that usage continued to be contested. The investigation of material culture from historical periods, meanwhile, remained part of a more generic antiquarian remit well into the twentieth century. Whilst specialisation was welcomed, exclusivity was not. On an institutional level if not an individual one, therefore, Ritter’s definition of antiquarianism as embracing ‘monuments, relics and old texts’ remained applicable in Scotland until at least the First World War.¹²⁸ Nonetheless, historians have traditionally preferred to associate their discipline with professional academics rather than enthusiastic amateurs and the establishment of history professorships in the early 1900s has often been read as evidence of reinvigoration after a supposed historiographical crisis.¹²⁹ Yet as Catriona MacDonald has pointed out, this undue emphasis on the universities underplays the significance of Scotland’s thriving antiquarian community in the later 1800s.¹³⁰ On the other side is an understandable tendency for archaeologists to view the antiquarian past primarily through the lens of their own disciplinary development. This is a legitimate assessment. In Bruce Trigger’s words ‘the roots of prehistoric archaeology clearly lie in European antiquarianism’; and that is as true of Scotland as anywhere else.¹³¹ But that is not all that Scottish antiquarianism was or did, and the search for disciplinary origins can lead to a kind of evidential cherry-picking which fails to acknowledge the character of antiquarian endeavour on its own terms. As Andrew Baines warns, this can result in an approach that ‘seizes on the achievements of those early archaeologists whose published work resembles the product of a modern archaeology’, whilst dismissing those who took a more expansive view of the antiquarian mission.¹³² The outlooks of modern history and archaeology can offer only part of the picture. An epistemologically unified approach to investigating the past remained vibrant and influential in Scotland well into the twentieth century. To understand it, we need to consider it on its own terms and avoid the presentism which modern disciplinary perspectives can bring.

¹²⁷ Manning, ‘Scottish science of man’, pp. 70-2.

¹²⁸ Ritter, *Concepts in History*, pp. 14-15.

¹²⁹ T. Devine and J. Wormald, ‘Introduction: the study of modern Scottish history’, in T. Devine and J. Wormald (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 1-17, at 5-8; Tindley, ‘Scottish History Society’, pp. 10-11. C. Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's past: Scottish Whig historians and the creation of an Anglo-British identity, 1689-c.1830* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 267; Ash, *Strange Death*, pp. 1-2.

¹³⁰ C.. MacDonald, ‘Rogue element: Charles Rogers and the Scotching of British history’, in G. Carruthers and C. Kidd (eds.), *Literature and Union* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 243-59, at 244-5.

¹³¹ Trigger, *History of Archaeological Thought*, p. 135.

¹³² A. Baines, ‘The inherited past of the broch: on antiquarian discourse and contemporary archaeology’, *Scottish Archaeological Journal*, 24 no.1 (2002), pp. 1-20, at 2.